Practices, Reflections, and Methodologies:
What Is Successful Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Technical Communication Workplace? (Part 2)

Technical
COMMUNICATION

Journal of the Society for Technical Communication

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Dr. Chris Dayley and Dr. Isidore Dorpenyo

Practices, Reflections, and Methodologies:

What Is Successful Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Technical Communication Workplace? Part 2

In this, the second of two special issues on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the technical and professional communication workplace, we continue to explore the idea that technical communication is inextricably linked to the workplace (academic, domestic, and organizational or corporate workplaces). This is evident in the genres primarily associated with technical communication: proposals, reports, memos, technical documentation or instructions, computer help files, blogs, voter documents, and many others.

In introduction to technical writing classrooms, instructors train students to become good communicators who will write clear, concise, effective, and efficient documents in their various workplaces. Often, technical writing instructors create a distinction between writing that takes place in a corporate or organizational setting (aka technical writing) and academic writing (aka composition). Kimball (2006) wrote that "most of what we recognize as technical communication begins and ends with corporate, government, or organizational agendas" (p. 67). He further showed how textbook definitions "introduce technical writing as a workplace skill" (p. 68). Similarly, Constantinides, St.Amant, and Kampf (2001) revealed how technical and professional communication "often takes place within a larger organizational structure—one that inevitably impacts the kinds of documents produced…" (p. 31).

Considering our historical affinity to organizations and corporate workplaces, it does not come as a surprise that several scholars in our field are interested in researching the workplace (Cox, 2019; Dush, 2017; Edenfield, 2017; Edwards, 2018; Evia & Patriarca, 2012; Longo, 2000; Petersen & Moeller, 2016; Spinuzzi, 2019; Wisniewski, 2018). However, despite the many articles addressing technical communication in the workplace, the exigency for this special issue was our concern that, despite the abundance of scholarship exploring the roles of technical communicators in organizations and different workplaces or workspaces, little research has been done regarding the state of diversity in the professional practice of technical and professional communication in the U.S. and across the globe.

Though the amount of scholarship is limited, we do have some information regarding the state of diversity in the technical communication workplace. In Carliner and Chen's 2018 *Intercom* article, "Who Technical Communicators Are: A Summary of Demographics, Backgrounds, and Employment," the authors reported findings of a census of technical communicators taken in the early 2000's. The census found that, at the time, 81% of practicing technical communicators who responded identified as white. This finding confirms Walton, Moore, & Jones's (2019) claim that one of the main concerns for our field is that "TPC remains predominantly white and patriarchal and there is an inclusion and representation problem in TPC" (p. 2).

Technical communication has seen increased scholarly interest in issues of diversity and inclusion. Most research regarding increasing diversity and inclusion in our field has focused specifically on academic programs. Jones, Savage, & Yu (2014); Savage & Mattson (2011); and Savage & Matveeva (2011) have shown that issues of diversity and inclusion are important, but the field has a long way to go before we can

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fully understand the ways in which exclusive practices affect the field.

More recent scholarship regarding diversity and inclusion in the field of technical communication includes the use of decolonial frameworks in technical communication scholarship (Itchuaqiyaq & Matheson, 2021), student perceptions of diversity in their technical communication academic programs (Dayley, 2020), how students from diverse background have difficulty discovering the field (Dayley & Walton, 2018), the importance of building interpersonal relationships with prospective students and increasing program inclusivity (Alexander & Walton, 2022), how technical communication scholars can collaborate with translation experts to design communication materials for multilinguals (Gonzales, 2022), how current "recruitment efforts alone may not be enough to more suitably engage with the interests and needs of diverse student populations" (Popham, 2016, p. 73), as well as Cana Itchuaqiyaq's excellent multiply marginalized and underrepresented scholars bibliography (Itchuaqiyaq, 2021, June 7).

These studies and ongoing concerns regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in workplaces that employ technical communicators beg several questions: What are the current demographics of practicing technical communicators in the U.S. and in European countries? In what ways do technical communicators contribute to DEI efforts in the Global North and the Global South? What steps are technical communicators taking to make workplaces inclusive and supportive of diverse people and ideas around the world?

Technical communication practitioners and scholars need to understand the state of diversity as practiced in organizations (both in the academy and outside of the academy) as this information will highlight what technical communicators are doing well and where improvements can be made. This research is also needed to inform academics and practitioners about strategies professional technical communicators are employing to increase diversity and to assess whether these strategies are successful or effective. With this type of research, academics will be better able to train students to become effective practitioners who are ready to take action and contribute to diversity initiatives in organizations, and practitioners will be able to learn from the experiences of others to incorporate better diversity and inclusion initiatives into their practice. This special issue, thus, seeks to highlight the experiences and practices of professional technical communicators as they relate to diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

In this Special Issue

The articles in this special issue (Part 2 of 2 issues) continue conversations in technical and professional communication that advance the notion that technical documents are imbued with culture, discrimination, politics, racism, and oppression (Jones & Williams, 2018; Walwema & Carmichael, 2021). In other words, the scholars provide examples of how workplace technical documents are not neutral, colorblind or apolitical.

In "Erased by Design: An Antenarrative of Ellenton and the Savannah River Plant" by Jamal-Jared Alexander and Avery C. Edenfield, the authors reveal the culture of erasure embedded in the Atomic Energy Commission's seizure of Ellenton's African American residents' property in the commission's desire to build the Savannah River Plant (SRP) to process tritium and plutonium-239. The authors analyzed historical documents produced by SRP to call attention to evasive rhetoric embedded in seemingly race-neutral and colorblind documents and notions of whiteness as property. They encourage scholars in the field to "exhume other stories of displacement and deceptive messaging that has had (or continues to have) a major impact on marginalized communities."

In the second article, "Participation, Diversity, and Legitimation in U.S. Housing: A Rhetorical Analysis of Two HOPE VI Reports," Christopher Morris argues that, despite our field's appreciation for participatory frameworks, participatory rhetoric can often invoke classed and racialized hierarchy and participatory processes can be co-opted to serve institutional means rather than for transformative ends. The author combines critical

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discourse analysis and rhetorical criticism to analyze federal reports associated with HOPE VI, a housing project initiative in the U.S., to illustrate how participatory rhetoric can be in service of the vision and mission statements of organizations rather than displaced or vulnerable populations they propose to serve.

In the third article, "Unreasonable Bodies: Thinking Beyond Accommodation in Workplace Lactation Law and Policy," Danielle De Arment-Donohue analyzes technical documents—three Virginia codes governing workplace lactation and one state human resources guidance document—to reveal how the policies have underlying ideologies that reproduce ableism and work to delegitimize women's bodies. As she puts it, "the codes ignore women's knowledge and material conditions."

The COVID-19 pandemic affected minority and vulnerable populations across the United States in a drastic way, but how are businesses owned by minority groups recovering? In the fourth article, "User Narratives of Transnational Multilingual Small Business Entrepreneurs in Disaster Relief Programs," Soyeon Lee calls attention to the inadequate scholarship exploring the economic and social distress experienced by immigrant multilingual Asian/American business owners during the pandemic. To address this gap, the author analyzes case narratives from Korean-speaking immigrants to understand how they managed to navigate three disaster assistance programs. User narratives from self-employed Asian professionals show

how "transnational multilingual small business owners tactically adopted nuanced collaboration tactics in navigating resource-constrained environments in post-pandemic workplace settings."

The final article, "Are You Committed to Diversity?: Evaluating Immigrants' Perceptions of U.S. Banks' Diversity and Inclusion Claims/Initiatives," which we co-authored with Meghalee Das, Aimee Kendall Roundtree, and Miriam F. Williams, included text mining, content analysis, thematic analysis, and interviews with U.S. immigrants from the Global South to reveal immigrants' perceptions of their interactions with financial institutions and if these institutions' formal statements on diversity, equity, and inclusion addressed immigrant concerns.

We would like to thank all of the anonymous reviewers who made this special issue possible. We would also like to thank *Technical Communication* editorial advisory board member Dr. Natasha Jones for ensuring that the final article, "Are You Committed to Diversity?: Evaluating Immigrants' Perception of Diversity and Inclusion Claims/Initiatives," was ushered through the anonymous peer review process.

As technical and professional communicators, our focus on user advocacy can and should inspire both practitioners and academics to lead the way in diversity, equity, inclusion efforts. "As a field with advocacy as its core mandate, technical and professional communication can play a vital role in justice causes that work to enact change in communities

because the field of TPC interfaces with audiences, perhaps more than any other discipline as a consequence of its advocacy and discursive practices"(Agboka & Dorpenyo, 2022, p. 6). Also, the type of advocacy done by technical communication research can and should lead to action (Walton, Moore, & Jones, 2019). Scholarship, such as the articles found in this special issue, can help us understand how technical communicators can create more inclusive documents in more diverse workplaces.

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ABOUT THE GUEST EDITORS

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On the Cover

ARTIST'S NOTES

To create a cover for the DEI special issue of *Technical Communication*, I worked with first-generation students from across campus to obtain their feedback. The students provided feedback about what they believe is missing from other academic cover illustrations. My goal was to design illustrations that go beyond the aesthetics of traditional academia. In general, my design philosophy became to create bold, colorful, fun, clever designs that attract attention, have a clear message, and appeal to a new generation of technical communication students, practitioners, and researchers.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Lucas Robbins is a technical writer in Austin, Texas, pursuing an M.A. in Technical Communication (MATC) at Texas State University. While focusing on social justice in Austin, Lucas developed an interest in graphic design during his MATC studies. While a graduate consultant at Texas State's University Writing Center, he applied design techniques to promote equity and inclusion on campus, refining his skills and philosophy through collaboration and iterative feedback. For the DEI cover illustration project, Lucas leveraged his diverse team experience, incorporating voices from the Texas State community to reflect its diversity, equity, and inclusion. In the future, Lucas hopes to study and implement design strategies for accessibility, inclusion, and diversity. Aspiring to champion research and student support services, he is dedicated to creating designs that are useful and effective for all users. Lucas can be reached at ogj11@txstate.edu.

Erased by Design: An Antenarrative of Ellenton and the Savannah River Plant

By Jamal-Jared Alexander and Avery C. Edenfield

ABSTRACT

Purpose: The purpose of this article is to examine the Atomic Energy Commission's use of eminent domain to seize the town of Ellenton and initiate the Savannah River Plant (SRP). We disrupt the presiding race-neutral history by reframing the story of Ellenton's African American residents, who were both disproportionately impacted by the seizure and whose experiences were erased from Ellenton's history.

Method: We analyze official SRP's histories alongside counter-narratives for examples of deceptive messaging and whiteness as property.

Results: Through our analysis of the "race-neutral histories," we recognize that African Americans—particularly sharecroppers and their families—bore the brunt of the Cold War's Savannah River Site's bomb plant.

Conclusion: Practitioners who are interested in organizational DEI work should recognize the danger of *race-neutral* accounts and actively search out excluded perspectives to give fuller context to their organization's work.

Keywords: Antenarrative, Deceptive Messaging, Displacement, Social Justice, Racism

Practitioner's Takeaway

By extending conversations in the field of TPC, we:

- Examine SRP's historical documents and demonstrate the need for an antenarrative that fills in the gaps of published historical text surrounding displacement of African Americans in Ellenton.

- Lay the foundation for a series-project while inviting readers to examine erased stories of other minoritized communities that have been displaced throughout history.
- Explore deceptive messages and extend the concept to TPC rhetors responsible for capturing the experiences of all involved.

Erased by Design

In 1950, The U.S. Atomic Energy Commission (AEC, now Department of Energy) took over several small towns in South Carolina along the southern border of the Savannah River through an act of eminent domain. The largest of these towns was known as Ellenton, primarily populated by African American sharecroppers and their families. The purpose of the seizure was to build the Savannah River Plant (SRP, now Savannah River Site) to process tritium and plutonium-239—materials required in nuclear weapons. While many archival documents were produced by SRP and related organizations (e.g., Savannah River Archaeological Research Program) over the next decades, few documents speak to the displacement in the inter/national and local contexts of violent anti-African American racism, white backlash against gains made during Reconstruction, the codified system of racial apartheid in the "Jim Crow" South, the Cold War, and nuclear armament to deter and, if necessary, win wars of (colonial) conquest abroad.

Throughout this article, we explore the unexpected and under-documented exodus and displacement of African American citizens in Ellenton—the site of a former plantation and the scene of white supremacist terrorism against its African American inhabitants (refer to Cassels, 1971; U.S. Senate Record, "Testimony"). We provide readers with a reexamination of the SRP's founding and mission to intentionally disrupt the presiding jingoist and race-neutral history (for a detailed discussion of race-neutral or "colorblind" racism, explore Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Crenshaw, 2019; Delgado & Stefanic, 2023). In other words, we focus on the *exclusion* of voices rather than providing readers with depictions of the missing voices by intentionally examining the gaps in the documents we exhumed. We examine whose voices were missing from these documents and identify the ideological choices that were made to exclude them—creating space for us to engage with displaced citizens and their families in Phase 2 of this project-series. Specifically, we'll look to review oral narratives from displaced families in hopes of amplifying the voices that were placed in the margins.

The necessity of revisiting documented recordings of an organization's history should not come as a surprise. The field of technical and professional communication (TPC) has historically recognized that documentation is never neutral but, rather, is rhetorical (Miller, 1979), cultural (Agboka, 2014; Scott & Longo, 2006), and may be implicated in oppression, including racist oppression (refer to the authors' previous work as well Bartolotta, 2019; Jones et al., 2016; Jones & Williams, 2018; Katz, 1992; Shelton, 2020; Williams, 2010; among others). By extending the work of Jones and Williams (2018), this project-series examines official histories alongside antenarratives (Jones et al., 2016) of former Ellenton residents. In the context of this article, we argue that antenarratives are useful for drawing attention to gaps in data, stories, and experiences that have been overshadowed and erased by design. Like Jones and Williams (2018), we consider the absence or hidden nature of some of these documents as evidence of a value system placed on whose narratives "count" as worth saving and sharing for our first phase. They write,

> The scarcity of these documents emphasizes how texts and technologies can be used in rhetorically and materially oppressive ways in terms of the access and availability of texts. In this way, access to texts and technologies can be used for oppressive purposes by ignoring, burying, or making historical documents harder to access in attempts to make history more palatable. (Jones & Williams, 2018, p. 386)

We have identified similar motivations in our review of Ellenton's historical records and provide readers with contemporary parallels of what antenarratives allow us to do.

This article will largely present the findings of archival work to offer a critical rhetorical analysis of the historical documentation of Ellenton citizens' displacement. In doing so, we identify the long-term ramifications of its historic erasures. Moreover, the documents we examine reveal not only gaps but also oppressive, supposedly race-neutral, policies that could pass in a court of law and the 14th Amendment's equal protection clause.

The presiding narrative about the displacement is one of sadness over a loss of a town, curtailed by pride in a patriotic sacrifice for the greater good. Historical documentation of the founding of SRP often highlights this "sacrifice" residents made in relocating (Ritchie, 2009). For example, one commonly shared photograph shows a hand-painted sign that reads:

It is hard to understand why our town must be destroyed to make a bomb that will destroy someone else's town that they love as much as we love ours. But we feel that they picked not just the best spot in the U.S., but in the world. We love these dear hearts and gentle people who live in our Home Town [sic]. ("I Don't Live There Anymore")

Despite this patriotic narrative, an examination of the gaps between records unveils how African American Ellenton citizens were robbed of equal protection under the law and fair compensation for their property—with long-term generational consequences. Further, we argue the absence of racial violence and oppression from historical accounts forgives past white supremacist violence in the area, generating a sentimental, race-neutral history for the ghost of Ellenton. By doing so, we hope to offer new possibilities for TPC scholars and practitioners working within government agencies to acknowledge a more complex past and present. When we say *practitioners*, we refer to three specific types:

- TPC specialist working toward diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in government organizations,
- Non-academic researchers working to create more just organizations—i.e., creating full histories of the field that speak to systemic racism, and
- Non-TPC research teams and specialists who create historical content.

Moreover, we provide readers with tools toward explicit efforts to rectify past mistakes and move forward with more just documentation.

BLACK FEMINIST THOUGHT

In order to understand the complexities of the SRP displacement of African Americans in the rural South, we explore the concept of antenarrative by introducing Black Feminist Theory as the analytical framework for the article. Jones et al. (2016) argue that the antenarrative approach of microstoria analysis explicitly focuses on the narratives of minoritized individuals while creating a space that invites scholars to actively disrupt dominant narratives (also refer to Boje, 2001). To successfully put the fragments of the missing story back together, we turned to Collins' (1989) Black feminist epistemology by centering the lived experiences of Ellenton's African American community.

Black Feminist Epistemology

Any discussion of Black feminist consciousness must begin with a definition derived from the ideas and experiences of Black women. Simien (2004) argues that "black feminist consciousness is the recognition that African American women are status deprived because they face discrimination on the basis of race and gender" (p. 83). African American women are doubly disadvantaged in socioeconomic structures, since they often bear the burdens of prejudice that challenge people of color and the various forms of subjugation that hinder women (Simien, 2004). Examples of these overlapping disadvantages can be found in a small cadre of Black female intellectuals—e.g., Patricia Hill Collins, bell hooks, and Audre Lorde, to name a few. Simien (2004) shows how these specific scholars have provided a range of perspectives with recurring themes that delineate the contours of Black Feminist Thought:

- The idea that a "sense of belonging or conscious loyalty to the group in question (i.e., Black women) arises from everyday experiences with race, class, and gender oppression,"
- The concept of intersectionality, where gender, sexuality, and race are "co-dependent variables that cannot be separated or ranked in political practice, scholarship, or in lived experience" (Ransby, 2000),
- The belief that gender inequality exists within the Black community and points to the patriarchal nature of Black male-female relationships, and
- The notion that "feminism benefits the [B]lack community by challenging patriarchy as an institutionalized oppressive structure and advocating the building of coalitions" (pp. 84-85).

While the perspectives above display the concept of Black feminist consciousness as rich and well-developed, Collins (1989) provides a unique experience with Black feminist epistemology that can be found as the core of this article. For example, "[B]lack women's everyday acts of resistance challenge two prevailing approaches to studying the consciousness of oppressed groups. One approach claims that subordinate groups identify with the powerful and have no valid independent interpretation of their own oppression" (Collins, 1989, p. 746). In the context of this article, oppressed African Americans of Ellenton, SC—known as a subordinate group—had this false consciousness

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since they identify with powerful entities known as sharecroppers and landowners without realizing they were often at the center of oppressive structures.

A second approach assumes that "the oppressed are less human than their rulers and, therefore, are less capable of articulating their own standpoint" (Collins, 1989, pp. 746–747). African Americans of Ellenton in the 1950s were one or two generations removed from the abolishment of slavery. Therefore, we argue that minimum (or lack of) education played into this notion of the oppressed not being knowledgeable enough to know (let alone understand) the intricacies of land ownership, property value, quality of land, or the actual value of one's land when Savannah River Plant looked to purchase property in Ellenton.

Collins (1989) shows how both approaches can be identified as "any independent consciousness expressed by an oppressed or dominant group as being not of the group's own making and/or inferior to the perspective of the dominant group" (p. 747). By taking a more critical eye that examines three public documents (Savannah River Archaeological Research Program, SRS.gov timeline and history pages, and the *Savannah River Site at 50*)—and the intentional harm and deceptive rhetoric used by Savannah River Plant, we take readers on a journey that explores the hidden stories and the lack of access to land ownership. We intentionally aim to disrupt the *polished narrative* given by those in power by highlighting race-neutral language and approaches they often took to bury the voices and experiences of African Americans, and the effects of the displacement on thousands of families. Specifically, as in Jones and Williams (2018), we introduce practitioners to deceptive messaging (McCornack, 1992) by extending the concepts in our rhetorical analysis below.

Deceptive Messaging

In his article, "Information Manipulation Theory," McCornack (1992) argues how "the principal claim of Information Manipulation Theory that messages that are commonly thought of as deceptive derive from covert violations of the conversational maxims. Because the speaker purposefully violates one (or more) of the maxims, s/he[/they] deviates from what can be considered rational and cooperative behavior…" (p. 5). In the context of this article,

the production (or presentation) of deceptive text is considered a phenomenon in which SRP exploited the belief on the *part of the listeners* that they, the rhetors, adhered to at some deeper level. In other words, readers may have been misled by their belief that the rhetor of these historical documents were functioning in a cooperative fashion—intentionally leaving out information that they felt wouldn't interest them (McCornick, 1992). McCornick (1992) and Camden et al. (1984) believe deceptive messaging involves diversion, not distortion; moreover, they note how "many lies are designed with the goal being to control the conversation, either by redirecting it or by withholding critical sensitive information" (p. 3; refer also to Camden et al., 1984, p. 313). The key here is that SRP avoided discussion of African American history but does not distort it.

Whiteness as Property

We highlight other cases of disenfranchisement in the segregated South by providing examples of whiteness as property. When we say, *whiteness as property*, we're referring to one of the tenets from Critical Race Theory where certain rights allow members of a dominate cultural group to establish an "exclusive club whose membership [is] closely and grudgingly guarded" (Harris, 1993, p. 1736; refer also to Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 85). Whiteness and white identity granted "tangible and economically valuable benefits and was jealously guarded as a valued possession, allowed only to those who *met a strict standard*" (Harris, 1993, p. 1726; emphases added). One example of whiteness as property can be identified by those individuals who have historically had access to land through segregated Black Codes— better known as policies and land ownership procedures designed to disempower (McCoy & Rodricks, 2015)—and displacement.

In the context of this article, property includes the right to own, purchase, transfer, or sell land to Savannah River Plant (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Harris, 1993; refer also to McCoy & Rodricks, 2015, p. 11). Here, we quote McCoy and Rodricks (2015) at length, as their study connects Whiteness to power relations:

> Whiteness as a concept is based on power relations (Harris, 1993). More specifically, whiteness is based on White dominance and the subordination

of People of Color. In describing the meaning and value associated with Whiteness, Ladson-Billings (1998) positioned critical race theory as an important intellectual and social tool for "deconstruction, reconstruction, and construction: deconstruction of oppressive structures and discourses, reconstruction of human agency, and construction of equitable and socially just relations of power" (p. 9). Critical race scholars have claimed that the concept of Whiteness can be considered a property interest because those individuals allowed to self-identify as White have social advantages (DeCuir & Dixson, 2005; Harris, 1993).

Communities such as Ellenton have experienced such power relations in the form of displacement throughout America's history, with many African Americans (in)voluntarily migrating across lands in the form of chattel or modern enslavement (i.e., Jim Crow Laws) (Garba & Sorentino, 2020). Many scholars define displacement as the indirect, gradual, or community-level processes of succession (Marcuse, 1985; Slater, 2009). However, Mascia and Claus (2009) provide us with a more concrete definition that centers around exclusion and fits the contexts of our antenarrative: economic and social exclusion (Cernea, 2000), and the product of physical exclusion—"a phenomenon conceptually and morally distinct from the loss of economic or resource use rights" (p. 17; also refer to Agrawal & Redford, 2007). Both definitions highlight how the disempowered and the divergent ways they lose rights, as well as the empowered, who often gain rights (Mascia & Claus, 2009). By examining both, we provide you, our readers, with insights into issues of power, equity, and justice.

OFFICIAL HISTORIES

In this section, we rhetorically analyze official documentation—that is, documentation of SRP history vetted and or produced by SRP or related, invested organizations. We call specific attention to examples of the erasure performed through race-neutral language and evidences of whiteness as property. These three documents include brief documentation from Savannah River Archaeological Research Program, SRS.gov's timeline and history webpages, and, most extensively, *The Savannah River Site at 50* (Reed, 2002).

Savannah River Archaeological Research Program

The Savannah River Archaeological Research Program (SRARP) manages the archeological history of the Central Savannah River Area, known as the CSRA. The program is hosted in the SC Institute for Archeology and Anthropology at the University of South Carolina and issues several publications. Its website provides history and archeological findings from the area. A 159-page report of resource management available on the site, "Archaeological Resource Management Plan of The Savannah River Archaeological Research Program," lists the goals of the partnership between SRARP and the AEC (now Department of Energy) are "cultural resource management, research and public education," (Archaeological Resource Management Plan, 1989, p. 10). Pertinent to this article, reckoning with past racial violence could be read as falling under research goal 1: "Conduct archaeological, geoarchaeological and historical research pertinent to the SRS and the Savannah River Valley" (p. 10). The report includes history back to 2000 BCE (p. 24) but does not once mention the area's long history of racial violence, despite discussion of other kinds of historic "human activity" in the area.

SRS. Gov's Timeline | "History Highlights"

SRS.gov, the official government website of SRS, includes a "History" page in the "About" drop-down menu. The page lists historical data in a timeline delineated by decades, beginning in the 1950s ("History Highlights," 2021). Though we recognize the significant interplay between environments and humans, that environmental impacts are not discreet from human impact (e.g., Bennett, 2010). "History Highlights" (2021) focuses almost exclusively on nuclear, technological advancements with one exception. Worker safety is discussed multiple times throughout the timeline, which ends in the 2010s. Highlighting worker safety to the exclusion of other cultural concerns redirects the reader's attention away from questions of justice to positive (human-focused) associations (nuclear energy is safe).

We are given, however, glimpses of the ways human impact was understood and communicated by SRS through small images and short captions on the timeline. While on this timeline there is almost no mention of Ellenton residents' displacement, the seizure of people's land and, in some cases, livelihood is acknowledged by

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a single line: "1950: Selection of location of Savannah River Plant (SRP), between Aiken, SC, and Augusta, GA, on the Savannah River, is announced." In the timeline is a grainy black and white image of a house hoisted on a flatbed truck with the caption, "House being relocated from the future Savannah River Plant" ("History Highlights," 2021). The 200x146 JPEG image does not provide much information, but we can make out four adults and one smaller person, possibly a child. There is an unreadable mile marker sign, but it's difficult to make out the races and genders of the people standing in the image, though it may be assumed by their attire that the adults are men. A reverse image search lists only this page as a source. Further down the timeline, we find another image of a large crowd lining the stairs that lead to a large unmarked wooden building. The caption reads, "SRP offered employment to thousands." Again, the caption and small images offer few details of whom these "thousands" were. The images and text solely depict white community members, excluding African American community members and their daily struggle against racism out of the discussion.

The Savannah River Site at 50

Reed's (2002) *The Savannah River Site at 50* provides us with a definitive history of SRS. The page offering the online PDF of the book describes it this way: "Through text and images, this 50th anniversary book presents an interactive comprehensive history of the Department of Energy's Savannah River Site, one of the major research and production facilities in in [sic] the United States' nuclear complex" ("The Savannah River Site at Fifty [1950–2000]".) Like other documents, The Savannah River site at Fifty documents the history of SRS from the arms race to AEC announcement, displacement, groundbreaking, and industry highlights. An unpaged section at the beginning of the book, "An Atomic History," begins with the announcement by the AEC of the location of the plant, met with excitement by the neighboring towns of Augusta, Aiken, and Barnwell, towns that would not be dismantled, but "In contrast, residents of the proposed site area listened sadly and carefully as U.S. Corps of Engineers officials outlined an eighteen-month staged evacuation of 1500 families" (Reed, 2002, para. 1). In this book, we do find some acknowledgement of race and racism.

According to Reed (2002), gossip columnist and reporter Dorothy Kilgallen conjured a scene from the antebellum South (i.e., a region whose economy and social structure relied on brutal chattel slavery), saying "It is as if Scarlett O'Hara had come home from the ball, wriggled out of her satin gown, and put on a space suit" (para. 3). Kilgallen's metaphor centers the main character in *Gone with the Wind*, a film John Ridley (2020), screenwriter for *12 Years a Slave*, describes as not merely carrying out the stereotypes of its time, but as one "that glorifies the antebellum south. It is a film that, when it is not ignoring the horrors of slavery, pauses only to perpetuate some of the most painful stereotypes of people of color" (para. 3). Ridley (2020) describes *Gone with the Wind* as "a film that … romanticizes the Confederacy in a way that continues to give legitimacy to the notion that the secessionist movement was something more, or better, or more noble than what it was—a bloody insurrection to maintain the "right" to own, sell and buy human beings" (para. 3–4). Kilgallen's comment conceals the centering of whiteness while sidelining people of color's experiences.

Further, Chapter 7, "Site Selection," describes how the site was decided upon (defense zones, distance from Russia, available natural resources, housing requirements, etc.). In comparing the two final destinations, the text notes, "The availability of skilled labor was scarce at both venues and the report notes that the South Carolina population, both white and African American, was rural and lacking in industrial experience" (Reed, 2002, p. 123). Further, surveyors and researchers for Du Pont, tasked with overseeing the project, noted that segregation and racism would be an issue:

> In pragmatic terms [a technical advisor] also advised that racial discrimination could be a problem at the South Carolina site…The documentary record suggests that Du Pont was already considering how to uphold the nation's law while working within a milieu that did not… "A check of Camp Gordon [another federal project, now named U.S. Army Fort Eisenhower] reveals that within the reservation the Military practice is no segregation; however, on bus line leaving the reservation, there prevails the practice of segregation. On a project such as we expect to construct, *it appears that the no-segregation law would be impractical to administer*."… Notably, *race would not surface in subsequent reports as an issue*. (p. 125, emphasis ours)

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Given the construction of the plant occurred in the height of Jim Crow apartheid and with staunch segregationist Strom Thurmond (Clymer, 2003) as governor, that race would not surface again in reports is an example of race neutrality in Du Pont's reports and *The Savannah River Site at 50*.

Regarding site selection, a primarily agricultural economy, Reed (2002) notes that "most of the farms were tenant-operated and the majority of the agricultural work force was African-American" (p. 125). The Army Corps of Engineers was designated to handle the acquisition of land from Ellenton and other smaller towns taken up by AEC for the plant. A document reporting the area "from the perspective of a buyer," notes "that the acquisition would affect up to 8,000 farmers of whom the majority were African American" (p. 142). The book does not discuss the fate of those farmers, and we can only speculate why: the AEC and/or related organizations and contacts did not deal justly with those farmers and their families. Without a full account, we can only speculate. That their fate is obscured in the text demonstrates an act of deceptive messaging, pointing the reader's attention somewhere else.

However, Reed (2002) does include an insert titled "African American Displacement." The inclusion of the insert points to the *exclusion* of African American stories throughout the rest of the history. Here, we are greeted with photographs of a barbecue, family reunion, and various smiling inhabitants; absent are facts or narratives on African American impacts. Instead, readers are given "happy" stereotypes. This section does, however, include few details of African American residents and the displacement's impact. For example, the authors write:

> The story of African American displacement caused by the making of the site is little known. While population figures from 1950 suggest that *African Americans were in the majority within the future project area*, the exact number of those affected has not been tallied. (p. 144, emphasis ours)

Corroborating this finding, Smith (1994) cites a U.S. Senate map that shows that, although it predates the AEC takeover of Ellenton, there was a vibrant and thriving African American population in the area.

> In 1875, the South Carolina population of white males over age 21 was 74,199; the adult black [sic] male population, 110,744. In Aiken County, where Ellenton was located, the adult white male population was 2,494, the adult black [sic] male population about 1,000 more; total white population was 12,397, total black [sic] population 17,907. (p. 143)

In other words, although thousands of African American men, women, and children were impacted by the DOE project, and some reports state that African American families were the majority of the population, there is little to no documentation of that impact on their lives, histories, or wellbeing. The missing numbers here cannot be by accident, but rather an intentional carving out of information, an act of injustice via race-neutral language. Reed (2002) himself clearly notes—in passive voice which does not place the blame on any one person—documentary bias as the primary reasons for this lack: "Accurate population statistics are difficult to extract from the existing data that is weighted toward describing mainstream history or is focused upon the site's Cold War history. The absence of primary documentary sources that relate to the black [sic] communities also plays a role in this bias" (p. 144). Note that "mainstream" means "white" history. Reed does not address who is responsible for this documentary absence.

Further, Reed (2002) notes that the SRARP has conducted research to uncover more African American history in the area, but "Despite these efforts, no systematic study has addressed how African Americans dealt with the changes required of them in 1950 and where these changes led them" (p. 145). Reed's statement is an indictment against past and present historians who have not valued African American history enough to study the long-term impacts of the AEC project. "Black land ownership was on the rise, and the news of the sale must have been devastating. Even worse for African American sharecroppers where "little help was available to guide them through the relocation process" (Reed, 2002, p. 145). Passive language further obscures intentionality. We have revised Reed's (2002) quote below to highlight privilege and danger hidden by the race-neutral language:

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For those *(white individuals)* who had the financial wherewithal to move regardless of the financial outcome on their land in the project area, it was fairly straightforward. These *(white)* individuals or families were able to move quickly before inflation set in and had a better selection of available house sites or farms. For *(the majority African American individuals or families)* those who share-cropped or rented, choices were to move elsewhere and continue farming or to apply to the project's employment office. (p. 150, italics and parenthesis ours, though whether families had the option to apply for employment is unclear).

Yet, despite Du Pont's observation of segregation, the historical realities of Jim Crow and historic racial violence, the power of the Ku Klux Klan, a segregationist governor, and other racial injustices, there is no mention of how much more difficult relocation must have been for African American families, again, many who were second or third generations away from enslavement.

EXPLORING WHAT WAS ERASED

In this section, we pick at the loose threads in the above official documentation to call to the center the stories that have been erased: African Americans bore the brunt of the displacement and have not been paid their due. Official histories whitewash the story to focus on white "sacrifice." By ignoring the struggles of African American landowners and sharecroppers and ignoring the racist historical context of the towns, SRP engaged in strategies that support whiteness as property and engages in deceptive messaging.

Whiteness as Property

To recall, whiteness as property refers to the ways in which white identity grants "tangible and economically valuable benefits" (Harris, 1993, p. 1726). For African Americans in Ellenton, examples of whiteness as property include claims of disparate pay for property, sharecroppers, and housekeepers; most folks in the area left without anything, with empty hands and on their own in hostile territory.

John Mullhouse (2005) operates a blog exploring "dead towns" titled "City of Dust." "Dead towns: South Carolina" includes narratives and images of Ellenton.

Mullhouse (2005) describes the process of appraisal and compensation, noting that compensation was perceived as far from fair, even for white folks in the area.

> The government told the residents of the area that it would buy back their homes, and 6,000 people sold. For all the property, including 210,000 acres of land, the government paid 19 million dollars. The estimated value of just the timber at the time was 28 million dollars. The former residents of what was now going to be one of the largest nuclear facilities in the world were not happy. Many found themselves moving into pre-fab government homes built just beyond the boundaries of the Savannah River Plant. (para. 2)

Aside from the long-term economic impact of the displacement, Mullhouse (2005) also describes the mental impact. He writes,

> When Ellenton was vacated, many of the younger residents left the area and never returned. Of those over the age of 50 that tried to make a go of it in New Ellenton, more than half were dead within 10 years. (para. 3)

Here, Mullhouse does not mention African Americans, leaving "residents" to stand in for both white and African American residents. Upon contact, Mullhouse shared a former resident's story with us.

> The saddest story involves the minority community from the area. This was at a time where segregation was strong in the South and few if any minority living in the area owned any real property as they were mostly farm hands who might share-crop or housekeepers working in homes of the non minority of the community. When it came down to move the minority of the area got nothing because they owned nothing. If you worked for a farmer, that farmer just couldn't buy acres of land a few miles off the site to keep farming as land being used or that could be used for a farm was not readily for sale. So you as a minority were out of a job, a rental or employer provided house, and had to look for work elsewhere. Most of the non minority specifically the farmers were in the same boat but had money from their land and structure

sale to the government to restart on… (personal correspondence, Nov. 10, 2022).

This personal narrative adds a missing element of the story of the impacts of displacement. Despite Reed (2002) acknowledging that African Americans were in the majority at the time and that many were sharecroppers, the "comprehensive history" does not include that many people were left on their own with nothing in the segregated South. Only one or two generations away from forced enslavement, many were left with nothing by the AEC takeover.

Deceptive Messaging

To recall, deceptive messaging is an act of intentionally misleading a listener (or reader). McCornick (1992) believes deceptive messages involve diversion, not distortion; moreover, they note how "many lies are designed with the goal being to control the conversation, either by redirecting it or by withholding critical sensitive information" (p. 3). We recognize deceptive messaging in the stories told (or untold) of African American experiences prior to, during, and after the AEC takeover of Ellenton and the surrounding villages.

We argue that by constructing narratives that are race-neutral, SRP engages in deceptive messaging, obscuring the disparate impacts. To be clear, as Reed (2002) acknowledges, "The story of African American displacement caused by the making of the site is little known" (p. 144). We declare that this story is "little known" by design. Official histories intentionally left out African American impact in favor of race-neutrality. In the case of collecting, saving, retaining, publishing, and sharing history of the people impacted by SRS's actions, for African Americans, no one cared: their stories were not included.

And yet, we still do not know how many people were impacted. The numbers do not add up. The introduction to Reed (2002) states, "[R]esidents of the proposed site area listened sadly and carefully as U.S. Corps of Engineers (COE) officials outlined an eighteen-month staged evacuation of 1500 families" (para 1). Later, Reed (2002) states "that the acquisition would affect up to 8,000 farmers of whom the majority were African American" (p. 142). Mullhouse (2005) gives a different number: "The government told the residents of the area that it would buy back their homes, and 6,000 people sold" (para. 2). Because

these numbers are race-neutral, i.e., they do not delineate by race, we can't know the total number of African American families who were impacted by the displacement, and we can't know the total number of economic losses. Because even Du Pont's own records do not discuss race, we can't know how they internally navigated segregation within the plant's borders.

Understanding that many lies were intentionally implemented via historical text that whitewashed the history of the Ellenton, the African American experience, or lack thereof, is, within itself, deceptive messaging. We claim that rhetors intentionally erased or elided African American topics due to (a) a lack of interest or appeal to the general reader/public and (b) to keep African American community members in the dark, causing them to relocate with little to no resources. Oral histories often compete against these historical documents, yet the experience of the marginalized continues to be erased to center white supremacist demand.

Moving back and taking a holistic account of the scene requires us to also account for the racist context in which the AEC takeover happened. None of the accounts we encountered reckoned with the area's history of violent suppression and white backlash against African American advances and ambitions. Prior to SRP, this violence was what the area was known for, although this history is never mentioned in any of the SRP accounts we found. Details of these events, the "Ellenton Riot," in particular, has been obscured. Ritchie (2009) shares one account as a footnote to an article on Ellenton. Before November 28, 1950, the town of Ellenton was known for the "Ellenton Riots" of 1876. Smith (1994) threshes through multiple letters, affidavits, and other accounts to give a composite narrative, writing:

> The riot lasted from September 15 to September 21, ranged over an area from Rouse's Bridge to parts of the Port Royal Rail Road, attracted Democratic rifle clubs from as far away as Augusta, and claimed the lives of up to one hundred blacks [sic], one white, with five or six whites wounded. To be sure, some of the facts regarding the riot will always remain elusive. There is no way, for example, to ascertain the exact number of blacks [sic] killed in the riot. The best that can be said of this matter is that between twenty five and one hundred lost their lives. (p. 152)

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Smith (1994) writes that this particular anti-African American violence was about political intimidation, but clearly the violence is white supremacist violence. "Thomas also alludes to the desire of Ellenton's white Democrats to attain political hegemony over the black community: 'If there should be an effort on the part of blacks to avenge their black prides, the whites… will not spare man of them—they intend to rule or kill the negroes [sic]'" (p. 154). In fact, racial violence in Ellenton was of such magnitude that the United States Congress investigated the matter, recorded in the Congressional journal's *Denial of elective franchise in South Carolina at elections of 1875 and 1876.* Despite the so-called Ellenton Riot and the shockwaves of white violence against African Americans, none of this history has appeared in the SRS historical documentation or, as far as we have found, SRARP, again, the organization tasked with keeping the area's history.

What would readers learn if these African American stories were included? How might the narrative shift to address anti-Black intimidation and ruthlessly unjust practices (systematically and life-related)? What would we learn about African American survival were we to have a fuller account? Were we to comprehend the full economic, social, and *generational* devastation of Ellenton, Dunbarton, and Meyer's Mill's African American communities, how much would be owed to them?

FILLING IN THE GAPS

By highlighting the discrepancies found within historical documents—whether it be an honest mistake, simple oversight, or what we believe to be deceptive messaging—we can conclude that something is missing. Ahmed (2020) writes, "documents are not simply objects; they are a means of doing or not doing something" (p. 85). In this sense, these historical documents may best be understood as nonperformative—i.e., they don't do what they say. Nonperformativity "describes the 'reiterative and citational practice by which discourse' *does not produce* the effects that it names (Ahmed, 2020, p. 117, quoting Butler, 2011, p. 2, emphasis in original). Yet, we can imagine a history of Ellenton and SRP that enacts justice through unveiling to white audiences the pain that had generational consequences for African Americans. Broader, we

believe that alternative histories may help documents to *influence* action, helping government organizations create more holistic and inclusive histories that call out their role in systems of oppression.

In order to provide a (more) complete account of what took place at SRP, more work is needed that centers and explores the accounts of the marginalized. Throughout this article, we have intentionally provided and analyzed example text of historical documents to home in on SRP property displacement and the effects it had on the Ellenton community. We acknowledge that highlighting these texts is not enough, and capturing personal accounts from remaining citizens is the best approach to discover what truly happened to Ellenton's African American citizens during the displacement.

Thinking of this article as the foundational piece to a project-series, the next phase introduces readers to a variety of missing pieces to the narratives mentioned throughout the three documents we addressed earlier. By exhuming the stories that were passed down from one generation to the next, we offer readers a glimpse into a more complete narrative of SRP by documenting the encounters of those that were displaced. In other words, we argue that the missing pieces weren't seen as a priority at the time these documents were created—even though writers of these documents could have easily kept these records if the experiences of African Americans mattered to them. By taking an empirical approach to interview the surviving citizens that were originally displaced (and their families), we hope to provide readers with the effects this displacement has had from one generation to the next—e.g., financial hardship, access to medical resources, educational advancement, etc.

Furthermore, we extend Collins' (1989) epistemology by documenting oral accounts of undocumented recorded interviews as *antenarratives of the oppressed*—filling in the gaps where we can. In other words, we provide readers with snippets of transcribed accounts of Ellenton's residents who have shared their lived experiences of the accounts we've outlined throughout this article. By sharing our unique experiences with government officials and SRP, we, too, hold ourselves personally accountable for being stewards of these antenarratives as technical communicators by ensuring the stories of the erased

are finally told—70 years after the displacement. By taking this approach, we offer readers comparison examples of deceptive messaging and explore different realities that citizens were subjected to—resulting in disproportionate outcomes.

We invite readers to exhume other stories of displacement and deceptive messaging that have had (or continue to have) a major impact on marginalized communities. As TPC scholars and practitioners, we have a chance to retell the histories of those that are often forgotten, and cases such as SRP are one of thousands that are waiting to be told.

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Participation, Diversity, and Legitimation in U.S. Housing: A Rhetorical Analysis of Two HOPE VI Reports

By Christopher J. Morris

ABSTRACT

Purpose: The purpose of this article is to consider: (1) how participatory rhetorics and methodologies can often invoke classed and racialized hierarchies and (2) the rhetorical strategies by which participatory processes in development contexts become co-opted for institutional means rather than for transformative outcomes.

Method: Blending critical discourse analysis and rhetorical criticism, I read two influential federal U.S. housing reports associated with the HOPE VI housing program to derive legitimation strategies seemingly at work in divesting local residents of significant participatory input.

Results: As suggested by analysis of the two reports, HOPE VI's participatory rhetorics consisted of four key legitimation strategies that constrained participation as: participation-as-cultural narrative, participation-as-bio/necropolitics, participation-as-diversity, and participation-as-theodicy.

Conclusion: The legitimation strategies reveal that participation is not a neutral framework. The methodology's institutional privilege has the potential to iterate hierarchy and the reproduction of marginalization. Even in explicit invocations of diversity, race, and community, participation risks the entrenchment of otherization. These problematic qualities challenge organizational and institutional efforts to achieve a transformative agenda for diversity and inclusion.

Keywords: Participation, Rhetoric, Diversity, Housing, Race

Practitioner's Takeaway:

- Participatory processes and their goals are defined in large part by their rhetorical constructions of difference and institutional imperative.
- Participatory methodologies lack neutrality. Critically evaluating their uses in development, public engagement, and housing offers opportunities for reassessing relationships between communication and collaboration.
- Diversity is an institutional framework and not inherently applicable for transformative goals related to identity and socioeconomic difference.

INTRODUCTION: PARTICIPATION, DIVERSITY, AND HOUSING

Participation has origins as a workplace approach to diversity. Indeed, participation has functioned as a methodological and communicative framework for negotiating classed and racialized difference. Participatory design, for instance, is rooted in workplace democracy movements in 1970's Europe, while participatory action research can be traced to decolonial labor movements also of the 1960s and 1970s (Robertson & Simonsen, 2013; Lenette, 2022). Today, participatory methods remain prevalent tools for engaging marginalized communities on behalf of institutions and organizations. In healthcare, for example, many practitioners rely on participatory communication for increasing public engagement in medical interventions in underserved communities (McFarlane et al., 2022; Seifer et al., 2010). Meanwhile, governments and local organizations have implemented processes like participatory budgeting as ways to increase input from marginalized and racialized groups (Lerner & Secondo, 2012; Kasdan et al., 2014). Technical communication researchers have long turned to participatory methodologies to coordinate varieties of stakeholders (Evia & Patriarca, 2012; Moore & Elliott, 2015). The social justice turn in technical communication values participation as a promising framework for bringing about diversity, equity, and inclusion (Agboka, 2013; Moore, 2018). Proponents of participation have *legitimated* its uses—that is, following sociologist Jürgen Habermas's concept of *legitimation*, sought to instill confidence in the administrative effectiveness of participation— by claiming that such methodologies instantiate democratic principles (Björgvinsson et al., 2012). Participation, however, has not been without its faults. Despite their often-purported social justice aims, participatory methodologies are fraught with racialized rhetorical and programmatic undercurrents that challenge the liberatory efficacy of the programs that participation supports.

Some critics see participation as a neoliberal rhetoric that builds consensus for economic development at the expense of the least powerful (Kaethler et al., 2017; Dore, 2022). From the standpoint of racial and ethnic diversity, other critics further contend that participatory methodologies often ascribe vulnerability and dysfunction to people of color as immutable characteristics. Pin (2020), for instance, in a critical assessment of participatory budgeting, concludes that, "Consistent with a racial-deficits model of organizing, people involved in participatory budgeting presented certain racial groups as embodying attributes that made engagement in the process challenging" (p. 587). Fashioning marginalized participants as vulnerable and pathological are persistent features of many participatory projects. Such persistence prompts the question, "How do organizations mobilize conceptions of diversity and participation to navigate racial and cultural difference in public engagement?" Quick and Feldman (2011) argue that "participation and inclusion are different and complementary ways of engaging diverse populations," with participation referring to programs, policies, and methods of community involvement, and inclusion referring to processes by which communities are formed (p. 285).

However, one area in need of further analysis is how participatory rhetoric functions as an essential communicative technology for "creating" the communities to be included and enlisted in public input. In other words, participation and inclusion are not necessarily separate processes. Rather, I argue, they work together in otherizing those called upon to participate. Ultimately, this otherizing tendency suggests that diversity as a concept relies on a racialized, participatory approach that allows institutions to engage in selective inclusion exemplifying how participatory rhetoric and methods tend to further legitimize the hierarchal difference it seeks to confront.

As an historical case study, this article evaluates the participatory rhetoric of the HOPE VI housing program, a federal public housing program in the United States known for its participatory approach in its destabilization of affordable housing. HOPE VI's use of participatory methods—against its own participants—illustrates how participation can devolve into a rhetorical method that leverages conceptions of diversity and inclusion to give cover to institutional and workplace antagonism. Indeed, concepts like *citizenship* and *participation* arguably have institutional violence baked into their deployment in many public housing publications, especially along the lines of race and development where, often, distinctions between workplace and community are collapsed. Accordingly,

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the purpose of this article is to interrogate the rhetorical machinations by which participation can be co-opted for institutional rather than transformative outcomes.

The methods of participation are linked to the rhetorics of participation. W. Michele Simmons's *Participation and Power: Civic Discourse in Environmental Policy Decisions* (2007) is especially instructive for thinking through this relationship between language and methods when it comes to institutional engagement with the public. Simmons reveals how public participation policies implemented by the U.S. federal government "actually worked to prevent significant participation" (2007, p. 43). In her historical analysis of risk communication in environmental policy, she finds that the government's documentation and technical communication (via laws, regulations, and reports) actually mandated limiting the programmatic extent to which affected residents could be heard on policy matters (2007, pp. 64, 85–108). On this front, Simmons's work demonstrates that participation works at the levels of both language and policy, rhetoric and methods, since the language in the documentation delimits programmatic methods. As a result of her analysis, Simmons calls for a "rhetoric of ethical participation [that identifies] … the unequal power relations that currently work to marginalize public involvement" (2007, p. 18).

Toward that end, my approach in this article is more proscriptive than prescriptive. I highlight communication practices to identify and to avoid. This article seeks to engage in a rhetoric of ethical participation by highlighting the rhetorical assumptions and strategies that HOPE VI used to co-opt participation, diversity, and inclusion. Focusing on the United States, I demonstrate that subsidized housing and mixed-income housing are products of a neoliberal ideology of diversity and reflect contemporary racialized population management. Diversity (i.e., racial difference) has become a commodity that development professionals sell to renters, buyers, and investors in a marketization of race. This marketization constructs racial (and other differentialized) representations as archetypal—by which I mean that diversity connotes a "desirable" form of racial difference that organizations, workplaces, and institutions operationalize through policy and rhetoric. Often, these diversity measures work against racialized subjects by obscuring how "desirable" forms of diversity legitimate institutional

and structural violence against "undesirable" subjects. In U.S. housing, as privatization and pro-growth agendas took hold in the 1980s, federal support for low-income housing took the primary form of subsidies to "desirable" lower-income renters so that these renters could live in Whiter, higher-income neighborhoods. Diversity, as a reflection of racialized desirability, "indicated a shared buy-in into an unmarked white, middle-class culture of tolerance … made possible by selective inclusion—the incorporation of respectable people of color among white people—but threatened by overwhelming numbers of unrespectable, low-income minorities and the low-cost rental housing they depended upon" (Berry, 2015, p. 150). In the contemporary neoliberal housing market, even newer, "affordable" housing initiatives (funded by subsidies to private developers) relied on racial population management in order to maintain the "desirability" of redeveloped areas. The result of these policies was that those most in need of affordable housing were often excluded from economic gain, further entrenching systemic inequality.

Frequently, *diversity* means symbolically flattening or erasing difference even as such difference is explicitly represented. However, what communication practitioners often miss is how difference is constructed such that institutions, organizations, and workplaces can go about the business of erasure. Importantly, participatory methodologies and their communication functioned as key rhetorical tools for the articulation of undesirability. When we analyze the HOPE VI federal housing program, we can recognize the rhetorical strategies by which institutions actually construct undesirable subjects to legitimate their own visions for a desirable diversity.

HOPE VI and Neoliberal Participation

HOPE VI (Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere) was a U.S. federal program that, from approximately 1992 to 2012, funded public housing demolition in favor of housing vouchers and privatized mixed-income developments that purported to emphasize citizen participation. More recently, similar federal programs have been implemented: Choice Neighborhoods (2010–present) and Opportunity Zones (2017–present). In response to the acute crime and concentration of poverty that affected public housing complexes and low-income communities by

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the late 1980s, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) committed to tearing down "the projects" and replacing them with more standalone, single-family homes. The initial stated goal of the program was to reduce the concentration of poverty and crime in public housing units. HUD sought also to deconcentrate poverty by giving vouchers to low-income residents to rent more expensive housing units in higher-income neighborhoods.

HUD's efforts resulted in thousands of affected low-income residents living in homelessness as well as a re-concentration of poverty in other areas. When HUD demolished public housing units and redeveloped communities with new houses, new retail, and social amenities, the department reserved fewer new units for low-income residents than had existed prior to redevelopment. In stipulating its form of desirability (i.e., diversity), HUD made admittance to the new developments contingent upon work requirements, drug tests, and criminal records. Lower-income residents who remained post-development were eventually priced out of neighborhoods that experienced rising incomes and expenses. At the same time, displaced residents who received vouchers to move to higher-income areas suffered a similar pricing out effect and struggled also to adjust to demographically different neighborhoods. Meanwhile, HUD justified this approach by citing lower crime rates and rising incomes in the redeveloped areas. Those statistical successes, however, were achieved in no small part by removing low-income, "undesirable" residents from a given neighborhood.

HOPE VI was the programmatic lodestar in a federally mandated, neoliberal mission to reduce the state's burden to house the nation's poorest—a crucial aspect of which manifested in HOPE VI's federal mandate that residents "participate" in the redevelopment process. For HOPE VI, participation generally meant enlisting resident input and feedback on the needs of the communities targeted for redevelopment. While participatory action research and methods have long been featured in community work, HUD appropriated participation in two major ways. To begin with, HUD instituted a perfunctory participation. The department mandated that housing authorities enlist resident participation through methods like surveys, forums, meetings, committees, resident councils, workshops, and newsletters.

Such methods are standard participatory tools. Indeed, HUD mandated that public housing authorities consult with public housing residents in drafting their initial redevelopment proposals. These consultations ideally took the form of "a resident training session and several public meetings" (Vale, 2019, p. 27). However, these requirements "remained vague, so actual practices varied quite a bit … [and] participation could often be rather rushed and limited, especially if a local tenant organization had leaders who were not broadly supported or well engaged with the full range of constituencies in the development" (Vale, 2019, p. 27). In this fashion, participation often became non-participatory. HUD policies created a crowding-out effect that ultimately amounted to something more akin to collusion among more powerful stakeholders. Likewise, HOPE VI embraced an oppositional stance in which these planning engagements served to manage the risk of resident pushback and stakeholder conflict, all while HUD used participatory rhetorics to legitimate its programs and to engage in selective inclusion and exclusion of resident input.

Secondly, HUD did not codify participatory requirements into law, which prevented any enforcement mechanism for residents to effectively implement their recommendations or address their concerns, even as housing authorities went through the motions of community meetings, for example, to fulfill grant applications. The participation that HOPE VI ultimately brought about was a participatory arrangement that bolstered public-private partnerships more than it supported transformative community work. Moreover, the participation that HUD favored featured the enlistment of a wide range of institutions and organizations to support redevelopment. These organizations included but were not limited to local governments, developers, financers, housing authorities, development associations, community organizations, architectural firms, and private companies. This kind of participation was borne from the reduced direct role of the federal government in providing affordable housing. Accordingly, HUD was able to leverage rhetorics of participation in order to limit resident power, while at the same time empowering other organizations to fulfill the state's role to their own benefit.

HOPE VI can be best characterized as an instance of participatory development, a development effort that acknowledges the benefits of working with local,

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"underdeveloped" communities. Though HOPE VI featured common participatory design methods like design workshops, HOPE VI was not a participatory design project. Additionally, though HUD and local housing authorities collaborated with residents to improve social services, HOPE VI was not an instance of participatory action research. Both of those approaches maintain standards and protocols that, as previously mentioned, were not institutionally, legally, or empirically stipulated in the HOPE VI program. That HUD's redevelopment efforts, featuring such a hodgepodge of methods with little coherence or accountability, illustrates a persistent operational and ethical problem with participation: It can devolve into an easy yet rhetorically powerful gesture that gives cover to institutional antagonism.

Concerns about such perfunctory participation are not new. Many scholars have put forth typologies of participation, where, for instance, problematic participation takes the forms of "therapy" or "manipulation" and efficacious participation is defined by "citizens control" and "self-mobilization" (Larsen et al., 2015, p. 7). What my analysis of HOPE VI suggests, however, is that such typologies are neither as static nor as simple. Rather, appeals to "citizenship" and "partnership"—the ethical end of the participatory spectrum—can facilitate a programmatic reality wherein the most vulnerable are indeed manipulated and pathologized by institutional language. Qualifiers like "citizen" and "citizenship," for example, are often defined to implement processes of exclusion at the same time that they presume to facilitate inclusion.

With implications for designers, researchers, advocates, and instructors, the purpose of this article is, accordingly, to interrogate the rhetorical machinations by which participation can be co-opted for institutional selectivity rather than for transformative outcomes. HOPE VI discriminated "against [the] lowest-income African-American women, because it disproportionately destabilize[d] the economically-precarious, female-headed households who predominate in the severely-distressed public housing projects its grants targeted" (Duryea, 2006, p. 571). To examine the relationship between the perpetuation of disparities such as these and the use of participatory rhetoric, I apply critical discourse analysis to federal reports associated with the HOPE VI program. In the following sections, first, I discuss my methodology of discourse analysis and rhetorical

criticism while also providing some detail on the artifacts I analyzed. Then, I typify the legitimation strategies derived from my analysis and offer detailed readings of my artifacts as organized by their legitimation strategies. Finally, I conclude with a brief discussion about disciplinary imperatives so that practitioners feel more equipped to continually interrogate participatory methodologies and their rhetorics.

METHODOLOGY: DERIVING LEGITIMATION STRATEGIES FROM CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AND RHETORICAL CRITICISM

My methodology blends critical discourse analysis and rhetorical criticism. While discourse analysis argues that institutions are driven by ideologies, the rhetorical criticism I practice shows how such ideologies are reflected in language and lines of argument. I analyze two major federal reports that represent significant turning points in the programmatic life of HOPE VI. I employ critical discourse analysis (CDA) to show how the discourse of participation, with respect to HOPE VI, facilitated institutionalist goals in national housing policy. CDA is effective because it allows researchers to incorporate multiple theoretical perspectives, analyze a wide variety of texts and contexts, and identify patterns of presumptions in communication. Along these lines, CDA functions as a critically productive analytic by which to establish generic qualities of institutional communication practices by organizing "strategies" and "discourses." Additionally, CDA helps establish rhetorics of participation as I discuss them here, enabling me to explain how social realities are produced and maintained through language or the "ideological character of discourse" (Fairclough, 2012, p. 10).

CDA is generally a recursive process of reading, whereby the practitioner moves interactively between theory and data collection. This process typically entails four stages: 1.) identify a "social wrong" that has come about in a dialectical relationship between semiosis and event; 2.) describe how ideology or other social elements take the semiotic aspect of the social wrong for granted such that there is a barrier to addressing the wrong; 3.) consider how the social wrong constitutes the function of ideology or social relations; and 4.) suggest "possibilities within the existing social process for overcoming obstacles to addressing the social wrong in question" (Fairclough, 2012, p. 15). The "taking for

granted" in the second analytic illustrates foundational compatibility with rhetorical institutional critique.

To evaluate institutional logics and their vocabularies, I practice rhetorical criticism on the artifacts. The rhetorical criticism I employ consists of the standard research process of selecting and analyzing artifacts, deriving research questions, reviewing literature, and theorizing communicative meaning therein. However, I take a more defined approach by engaging in ideological criticism, in which the critic "looks beyond the surface structure of an artifact to discover the beliefs, values, and assumptions it suggests" (Foss, 2018, p. 237). In that respect, I perform the four analytical moves put forth by Foss (2018): "(1) identifying the presented elements of the artifact; (2) identifying the suggested elements linked to the presented elements; (3) formulating an ideology; and (4) identifying the functions served by the ideology" (p. 243). This style of rhetorical analysis provides practitioners and scholars alike useful tools for explicating the complexity that lays at the heart of many social problems and solutions, while examining the relationship between rhetoric and methodology. This relationship is based on the idea that a document's rhetoric represents the communicative predicates and strategies involved in carrying out methodological practices. This relationship is ultimately how I establish links between HOPE VI's: rhetoric, methods, and exclusionary effects.

The following documents were chosen for analysis, based on their significance in the federal deliberation processes that legitimated HOPE VI as policy:

- *A Decent Place to Live*—a 71-page report completed in March 1988 by the National Housing Task Force, which the report says, "was established in September 1987, as part of a Congressional effort to reexamine America's housing policy" (HUD, 1988, para. 1). The report states that the purpose of the Task Force was "to undertake a comprehensive review of housing policy" (HUD, 1988, para. 3). Moreover, the Task Force was comprised mostly of developers including James Rouse, pioneer of urban renewal—or "Negro Removal" as James Baldwin once remarked—but also included financiers David O. Maxwell and Lewis Ranieri, who would both later be criticized for their roles in the subprime mortgage crisis. The context of the report was a spectacular rise in crime and poverty in American cities as well as a shortage

in affordable housing, as political will to invest in public housing had waned. The discursive frames and policy recommendations in this report laid much of the groundwork for HOPE VI, urban redevelopment, neoliberal development that characterized the 1990's and early 2000's. Congressional lawmakers looking for solutions and support from the private sector for the housing crisis were the report's primary audience.

- *HOPE VI: Building Communities and Transforming Lives* (1999)—a promotional report written and distributed by HUD in the later years of the Clinton Administration. At that time, Congress had codified HOPE VI into law for the first time with the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 (Public Housing Reform Act), marking a move away from the contingent, legally ambiguous appropriations bills that had previously constituted the HOPE VI program. As a result, the Clinton Administration and then-HUD Secretary Andrew Cuomo embarked on a promotional tour to tout the successes and benefits of the program to residents and potential development partners. This report, replete with optimistic visuals and a foreword from Cuomo, was part of that campaign and exemplifies the typical legitimation discourses associated with HOPE VI.

To analyze the reports, I practice rhetorical criticism informed by ideological critique. By analyzing HUD reports for ideological and discursive elements of participation, neoliberal governance, and racialization, I identify four key rhetorical strategies that legitimate institutional intervention at the expense of participants (Table 1). The strategies exemplify how the undercurrent of desirability in diversity rhetoric and policy relies concomitantly on policies and rhetorical expressions of undesirability, thereby entrenching hierarchy and difference in favor of institutional managerialism. The strategies are: participation-as-cultural narrative, participation-as-bio/necropolitics, participation-as-diversity marketing, and participation-as-theodicy. I view these strategies as heuristic and instructive, inasmuch as they illuminate communicative practices to avoid. After all, as Simmons contends, "rhetoricians and technical communicators involved in policy … can use … participatory heuristics to help

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them identify oppressive power relations and look for spaces to intervene" (2007, p. 134). In the next section, I demonstrate how each legitimation strategy manifested in the rhetoric of HOPE VI federal reports.

ANALYSIS: HOPE VI'S RHETORICAL LEGITIMATION

Participation-as-Cultural Narrative

Homeownership constituted HOPE VI's predominant cultural narrative. Proponents and policymakers argued the goal of housing in the United States was for a greater number of people to own homes as a way of fulfilling the American Dream and achieving socioeconomic agency. The National Housing Task Force asserted that "Homeownership is a fundamental American ideal" (HUD, 1988, p. 45). HUD stipulated that "Homeownership is vital to long-term neighborhood stability and thus is an important element of most HOPE VI revitalization plans" (HUD, 1999, p. 8). A significant HOPE VI mandate was to present "opportunities for homeownership" (HUD, 1999, p. 3). From a policy perspective in the late

Table 1: Institutional participatory legitimation strategies

Legitimation Strategy	Definition/Function	Rhetorical Characteristics
Participation-as-Cultural Narrative	• frames participants as to be included in hegemonic cultural narratives • draws contrasts between desirable populations and populations that threaten hegemonic values	• appeals to group, national, or cultural "ideals" • identification with normative values, like family, safety, and consumption • teleological narratives—using outcomes or purpose to justify action • modal verbs such as "should," "will," or "must"
Participation-as-Bio/Necropolitics	• constructs participants in relation to a larger collective body • emphasizes the biological, physical, and mental (in)capacity of participants • constructs participants as embodying risk and signifying death—both bodily individual death as well as national or international decay • casts participants as embodying a social death, threatening the realization of hegemonic values	• invocation of life-based processes (e.g., life, death, birth, decay, and transformation) • phrases like "healthy," "revitalization," and "renewal" • threat construction of the "dangerous" or "endangered" outsider • affective, descriptive references to (excessive or aberrant) violence, disease, and/or social/sexual deviance
Participation-as-Diversity Marketing	• emphasizes enlightenment and progress • invokes diverse or integrative approaches • signifies "development" or that which is developed • portrays institutional participatory approaches as new and innovative, especially with institutional diversity rather than ethnic diversity in mind	• metaphoric scientism, marked by phrases like "frontier," "laboratory," and "sophistication" • futurist discourse (e.g., "new," "modernization," and "creation") • repetition of the word "diversity" and both its etymological and cultural variants (e.g., "diverse" and "opportunity")
Participation-as-Theodicy	• signifies an institutional burden or responsibility • reflects institutional necessity to police values, resources, and populations • amounts to a defense of the institution's goodness and omnipotence in view of the existence of whatever harm or threat would legitimate intervention	• genetic fallacy (all good and bad result from the actions or inactions of an institution) • the institution as a frequent subject of a sentence and performing a functional and positive act • (rhetorical/linguistic) displacement of institutional power when the institution is not the sentence's subject

1980s and early 1990s, this position proliferated amid the backdrop of an increase in homelessness, with the corresponding Task Force figuring that "A decent home is the important beginning point for growth into the mainstream of American life" (HUD, 1988, p. 3). In HOPE VI, participation was largely defined by homeownership, which represented one's desirable inclusion into mainstream socioeconomic norms.

In the legitimation strategy participation-as-cultural narrative, participants are framed as being inducted into hegemonic cultural narratives by way of institutional intervention. In some cases (HOPE VI included), participatory discourse has a constitutive rhetorical effect whereby participants are often pathologized, stereotyped, or cast as emblematic of a larger cultural problem. For HOPE VI, the premise was that low-income residents were incapable of self-determination as signified by homeownership. In the neoliberal American context, the discourse of "self-help" crafted a narrative with certain kinds of characters who required institutional management, and as such, "Instead of engaging an already defined and unitary poor subject, each 'self-help' approach proscribes a certain kind of citizen" (Kohl-Arenas, 2011, p. 814). In other words, HOPE VI's process of selective inclusion entailed prescribing particular types of citizens (homeowners, in this case) as being fully and appropriately "American." Moreover, as Kohl-Arenas (2011) contends, "During the neoliberal turn of the 1980s 'self-help' took yet another form as conservative politicians and public intellectuals put forth the now well-worn argument that a bloated welfare state … has created deep dependency among the poor" (p. 814). Thus, in HOPE VI, low-income participants were framed as dependent and lacking in self-help. With respect to written documentation, HUD enacted this framing by appealing to "national" ideals that leveraged hegemonic identification with normative values, like family, safety, and consumption. Moreover, this rhetoric suggests that participatory cultural narratives legitimate institutionalist aims by drawing contrasts between good and bad "kinds," between desirable populations and undesirable populations that threaten hegemonic values. Such threats, in turn, legitimate institutional action.

A Decent Place to Live claimed that "programs to facilitate homeownership and to assist owners in maintaining their properties are key elements in a comprehensive, locally developed housing strategy"

(HUD, 1988, p. 47). Years later, HUD adopted this framework and argued that increased access to homeownership would bring the disempowered into the fold of the American economy: "the flight of … families from declining cities weakened local economies, crippled local institutions, and frayed the ties that bind the poor families that remain to the values and the opportunities of mainstream society. In cities across America, HOPE VI is giving these families new reasons to return" (HUD, 1999, p. 8). These statements allude to White flight from urban areas and imply that, once inner cities were to undergo institutional intervention, they would again be desirable and "normal." Such deployment of selective inclusion invokes a persistent racialized contrast that often "redirects blame for substandard schools, low wages, and scarcity of jobs away from the structural forces that caused these problems while simultaneously reinforcing stereotypes about African American families" (Greenbaum, 2019, p. 2). HUD underscored that "HOPE VI communities are able to compete because they can offer the attributes that most households seek—quality housing, safe streets, good schools, and proximity to shopping and employment" (HUD, 1999, p. 8). Notably, "these families" and "attributes" signify "normally functioning" (i.e., normally participating families)—once more invoking the constitutive nature of participatory rhetorics. HUD drew distinctions between desirable behavior as displayed in some and undesirable behavior as displayed by others. A participant's desirability was determined by their relationship to hegemonic narratives, which had the concurrent effect of naturalizing institutionality while at the same time pathologizing participants.

Participation-as-Bio/Necropolitics

Like the participation-as-cultural narrative strategy whereby participants undergo symbolic and behavioral (mis)alignments with the hegemon, participatory discourses construct participants as parts of a larger collective body. The rhetoric that invokes a collective body emphasizes the biological, physical, and mental capacity of participants. In economic development, participants are often constructed as embodying risk and signifying death—both bodily individual death as well as national or international decay. In that way, participatory discourses are biopolitical. Generally, biopolitics refers to the state's ability to defend

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society and to regulate human life. Foucault argued that biopolitics was a "management of state forces" that relied upon configuring "populations" whose subjections were defined by "particular biological and pathological features" ([1978] 2007, p. 367). In the context of federal housing, biopolitics reflects racialized, classed, and gendered methods for determining what "kinds" of people live where and why. At the same time, while the state regulates life, it regulates death also; the state is necropolitical, in that it exercises "the power and the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die" (Mbembe & Meintjes, 2003, p. 161). Participatory discourses are bio/necropolitical when they legitimate interventionist policies, usually by naming a harm to the collective, societal body—be that harm physical or cultural—which is almost always refracted through a "national" or institutional ideal that gives cover to racialized population management (Goldberg, 2008; Smith & Vasudevan, 2017).

Participants in this legitimation strategy are figured as at-risk by virtue of their exclusion or difference from the hegemonic norm. Conversely, the hegemonic norm is threatened by the "dangerous" or "endangered" outsider. The legitimation of this threat-exclusionary paradigm stems from the bio/necropolitical capacities of the state and its capillary institutions. In HOPE VI, crime and socio-environmental collapse were the threats that the state mandated participation remedy. In 1988, the Task Force staked their programmatic efficacy on "the vital role that housing plays in human and community development" (HUD, 1988, p. 4). Later, HUD emphasized "the importance of transforming the lives of public housing residents as well as their physical environment" (HUD, 1999, p. 4). Accordingly, participation was very much propagated as essential to achieving full-fledged agency and humanity for the excluded, as HOPE VI promoted "human development" contingent upon "place" in society, which could be transformed as one's "life" also could be transformed.

Crime was the impediment (i.e., the threat) that participatory mixed-income housing would overcome. *A Decent Place to Live* painted a bleak picture of the excluded zones of America's underdeveloped. Referencing drug-related crime in the urban United States, the Task Force wrote, "The plague of drug use and drug dealing must be confronted" (HUD, 1988, p. 3). They refer to gang-related activity as "domestic terrorism," and weave an existential crisis in which

"some urban neighborhoods, housing projects—both public and private—have been reduced to contested turf, dominated by battles between gangs, between drug pushers, between any two people with a gripe and weapons. Children walk to school in fear of being shot; they are recruited to serve as drug dealers and prostitutes" (HUD, 1988, p. 10). With a gesture toward the policy imperative of the state, the Task Force recommended "the range of anti-drug, law enforcement and related actions … be taken to stop the violence" (HUD, 1988, p. 11). They go on to say, "Just as a national task force to combat terrorism was convened in 1985 … a similar high-level effort against domestic terrorism is needed today" (HUD, 1988, p. 11). To deal with these threats to the nation, and "In order to ensure success, local government must participate in identifying and carrying out solutions" (HUD, 1988, p. 34). Lastly, the Task Force's participatory discourse reflects a paradoxical structure of exclusion/inclusion, when they write "that the persistence of intolerable conditions in even a very few projects blights not only the lives of the people who live in them and the neighborhoods in which they fester, but the entire effort to house low-income people in the United States" (HUD, 1988, p. 34). Such framing of participants as risks-at-risk reveals that, as participatory discourses take root (especially in healthcare and housing, for instance), participation can be framed to hinge on the axis of life and death.

The intervention that the federal government made in these matters was framed as one of necessity since, according to HUD, "without access to the jobs, the support services, or the transportation that would enable residents to move up and out—we should not have been surprised when these projects failed" (HUD, 1999, p. 3). HUD was "committed to ensuring that residents at all HOPE VI sites have access to the information, expertise, and support they need to participate fully at every step of the redevelopment process" and "rather than reinvest in failure, build new communities. Start from the ground up" (HUD, 1999, p. 3). In this participatory framework, the intervention provides the tools for the underdeveloped to participate, and this participation solves both deficit and threat. The excluded are transformed by virtue of participatory interventionism, since with HOPE VI, participants have "the power to see a better future" (HUD, 1999, p. 11). In other parts of the federal reports, residents are termed "poverty-stricken" who can "transform" and be

"strong," "as first-time homeowners … [are] no longer weighed down by isolation and despair [and] able to realize the American Dream for themselves and their families" (HUD, 1999, p. 11). HUD thus accentuates its role in mediating life and death by contrasting pre-intervention, underdeveloped residents against full-fledged, healthily functioning Americans.

Equally important, individual transformations mirrored a neoliberal transformation of the state and its institutions. Specifically, the transformation totaled a move toward self-sufficiency and a sort of de-public-ing that matched that of the housing market, as engineered by the federal government. According to HUD, HOPE VI services "show prospective homebuyers how to clean up their credit and maintain their home, equipping them with the knowledge they will need to become astute home seekers, qualified mortgage applicants, and successful owners" (HUD, 1999, p. 11). In moments like these, *A Decent Place to Live* evoked a series of metamorphoses wherein residents will develop and evolve from mere residents to full participants in the housing market. Public housing serves as a cocoon for a homebuying butterfly. Elsewhere, HUD employed the metaphor of a sociopolitical ladder, along which residents were expected to ascend at last from state dependent to independent citizen: "HOPE VI provides a ladder of assistance to residents of distressed public housing, for whom the climb out of dependence to self-sufficiency can be particularly tricky" (HUD, 1999, p. 12).

HUD also highlighted how HOPE VI sites supposedly helped "entrepreneurial public housing residents become small business owners" (HUD, 1999, p. 13). This emphasis on entrepreneurialism ultimately instituted a second layer of exclusion, because it added an individual deficit on top of a cultural one. For example, HUD wrote, "HOPE VI developments are being enriched with a vast array of resources and services that can help any motivated resident climb toward a better future—but motivation is the key. Many housing authorities have established rigorous admission requirements for HOPE VI communities" (HUD, 1999, p. 14). These requirements meant that "the housing authority may require that public housing residents be in a self-sufficiency program that sets clear goals for moving toward independence. Like any private landlord, most housing authorities demand that residents do not have a recent history of abusing their lease, their credit, or the law" (HUD, 1999, p.

14). In this case, participation functioned as both a means and an end. The excluded are made agential by participating in institutional processes, so that, in the end, the excluded may participate as a state of being and thereby maintain their own lives as well as the life of the institution.

Participation-as-Diversity Marketing

Diversity marketing is generally understood as marketing to diverse audiences, which requires "acknowledging that marketing and advertising must offer alternative ways of communicating to diverse groups" ("Diversity Marketing," 2020). Participatory discourses frequently extend past marginalized groups of people and refer additionally to entire organizations or sub-institutions. According to Kohl-Arenas (2011), "While participatory processes of the 1960s were often aimed (at least in language) at confronting and gaining access to unequal power structures, modern day participatory processes are designed primarily to build trust, relationships, or to 'integrate' once 'isolated' populations into the global marketplace" (p. 815). Mohan and Stokke (2000) make similar conceptual links between neoliberal institutional participation and decentralization. Neoliberal participation means involving a greater number of organizations (typically, private institutions) with the added aim of diffusing accountability. When "organisational arrangements for decentralisation include, in order, privatisation, deregulation, delegation, devolution, and deconcentration," they argue, "the notion of participation in state decision making … means market transactions" (2000, p. 248). Put another way, participation represents an impulse to totalize power "based on a harmony model of power" (Mohan & Stokke, 2000, p. 249).

Beyond organizational harmony, however, a key aspect of diversity marketing is an emphasis on enlightenment and progress, such that the communicator, in calling upon diverse or integrative approaches, signifies "development" or that which is developed from a techno-intellectual standpoint. Coupled with consistent appeals to racial and ethnic diversity, participatory aspects of HOPE VI relied heavily on the portrayal of its participatory approaches as "new" and "innovative," especially with institutional diversity rather than simply ethnic diversity in mind. To be clear, rhetorical uses of futurity and innovation retain

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a racialized character, given the fraught legacy of terms like "primitive" and "backward" to refer to colonized and formerly enslaved peoples. Thus, while marketing claims of exigent and exciting products are nothing new, in the case of HOPE VI, it does demonstrate a discursive relationship between the developed (i.e., the enlightened, the innovative, the progressed) and all the socioeconomic machinations of mixed-income housing, namely neoliberal decentralization. As a result of this relationship, the HOPE VI participatory scheme suggests that an interventionist legitimation as applied to instances of socioeconomic "failure" or deficit allows the state and institutions to undergo their own transformations. This allowance potentially curtails democratic and legal avenues for implementing state accountability, because the state can promote undemocratic outcomes while proclaiming participation-based progress, as it did in HOPE VI, when HUD espoused belief in "the capacity to foster communities with a diversity that fulfills the promise of America" (HUD, 1999, p. 8). This diversity was just as reflected in diversity of organizational and institutional input as it was reflected in ethnic numbers games. In rhetorical terms, participation-as-diversity marketing manifests as metaphoric scientism (marked by phrases like "frontier," "laboratory," and "sophistication") and as futurist discourse (e.g., "new," "modernization," and "creation").

It is therefore particularly significant that HOPE VI's organizational diversity was marketed as a new frontier in institutional configuration. "In addition to its tremendous significance as an urban revitalization tool," HUD argued, "HOPE VI is the laboratory in which the future of public housing is being tested today" (HUD, 1999, p. 16). The mixed-income approach was touted as the cutting-edge of planning and urban problem-solving. This cutting-edge aspect relied on participation for legitimation, since, "A primary explanation for the mixed-income and, increasingly, mixed-use nature of HOPE VI revitalization plans is the growing sophistication among grantees and their financial advisors in obtaining and coordinating diverse public and private funding sources" (HUD, 1999, p. 16). Furthermore, HUD stated, "One of the lasting legacies of HOPE VI will be that grantees, residents, partners, and other stakeholders are working together to creatively transform America's worst public housing into 'communities of opportunity' for the new millennium" (HUD, 1999, p. 16).

Participation for HOPE VI and HUD was most valued when it instantiated an institutional imperative to fashion itself anew amid intensified coordination of various organizational actors.

This techno-intellectual imperative had been established at least since the Task Force's 1988 report, which also argued for participatory mixed-income programs on grounds of innovative institutionality. The Task Force referred to a decentralized, localized formula as a "new era of cooperation" (HUD, 1988, p. 12). Promoting mixed-income developments as a "modernization program," the Task Force wrote, "The combination of effort by these public and private entities constitutes a 'new wave' of initiative and resourcefulness in meeting our critical housing needs. Vigorous and diverse, it raises new possibilities and new hope for housing low- and moderate-income families" (HUD, 1988, pp. 33, 10). In heralding the state's domain of enlightenment and epistemic authority, *A Decent Place to Live* called for a "new spirit of cooperation" that "should arise between the federal government and private owners of assisted housing in order to preserve … housing for low-income residents" (HUD, 1988, p. 12). In gesturing toward organizational participation, the Task Force remarked, "Local financial institutions, the business community and religious organizations are all important players in this 'new wave' of local initiatives" (HUD, 1988, p. 19). This innovation referred heavily to democratization of finance and securities instruments. "The new wave is characterized by new sources of money," the Task Force wrote, as well as, "new ways to cut construction costs and new techniques to reduce barriers to affordable housing" (HUD, 1988, p. 19). In terms of the federal government's role in housing finance, the Task Force labeled it a "new delivery system" and that "the rise of this new system could not have happened without substantial federal assistance" (HUD, 1988, p. 19). HOPE VI's participatory discourse indicates a dual function of diversity marketing—a function that communicates diversity as participation in identity-based liberalism and also one that relies on appeals to "innovation" and the "new" to signal the enlightenment and competence of the institution.

Participation-as-Theodicy

In a general sense, participatory discourses imply an institutional burden or responsibility to problem-solve

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by recruiting others to participate. In some cases, this burden is managerial (e.g., participatory design in workplace settings). In others, this burden can be more values-based (e.g., a community organizer who engages in participatory action research). Such burdens reflect the hegemonic and presumptive imposition of statist logics whereby values and materiality are institutionally mediated. Indeed, participatory practitioners often make decisions on behalf of institutions. The institutional necessity, then, to police values, resources, and populations represents a theodicean quality. If theodicy is the "defense of God's goodness and omnipotence in view of the existence of evil," as Merriam-Webster would have it, then participation here amounts to a defense of the institution's goodness and omnipotence in view of the existence of whatever harm or threat legitimates intervention or concern.

In the case of HOPE VI, the theodicean quality manifests as a duty on the part of the federal government to create favorable conditions that would support a homeownership society. Crucially, though, this federal duty is construed as supporting private finance and decentralization, such that, ultimately, the federal government's role is mitigated or obscured even as the role remains central. This arrangement—both materially and discursively—indicates that an underlying neoliberal approach pervades institutional complexity, especially when it comes to mixed-income housing. The federal move toward financial securitization and democratization was certainly central to mixed-income housing, and the National Housing Task Force believed that "The simple device of pledging the full faith and credit of the federal government revolutionized the nation's housing system by making possible long-term mortgages at a fixed cost with low down payments—turning America into a nation of homeowners" (HUD, 1988, p. 9). The Task Force doubled down on federal intervention when they wrote, "What is missing is adequate participation by the federal partner" and "Today, we need a renewed federal commitment to capitalize on the private sector's growing body of experience in producing and rehabilitating low-income housing through its partnership with the public sector" (HUD, 1988, pp. 9–10). They even offered that "the federal government is the pivotal force in meeting housing needs and must be the principal source of funding" (HUD, 1988, p. 11). At the same time, however, for the Task Force, the

federal government would be essential only insofar as it facilitated wider participatory institutionalism.

The discursive interplay between facilitation and necessity on the part of the federal government signified a defense of the institution's omnipotence and its capacity both to transcend and permeate the larger system. According to the Task Force, "This [federal] capacity can be used to develop new alliances among the public, private and community sectors to produce and preserve affordable housing" (HUD, 1988, p. 10). In this regard, the alliance would consist of "civic and religious groups and national and local nonprofit organizations that would help facilitate the delivery of housing opportunity to those who need it" (HUD, 1988, p. 10). The Task Force additionally advocated a housing system based "on the understanding that government closest to the people is best situated to identify and respond to needs and conditions—especially the conditions of local housing markets" (HUD, 1988, p. 11). This participatory approach was endemic to HOPE VI over the program's lifespan. In 1999, HUD described HOPE VI as "collaborative, enlisting a wide range of stakeholders—including mayors and other elected officials, resident organizations, developers and lenders, government agencies, nonprofit and faith-based groups, and many others—in partnerships that marry public goals, private-sector energy and funding, and the dormant hopes of community residents" (HUD, p. 5). This deferential role prescribed by the federal government ironically figures the federal government as the primary determinant of participation while it also advocates for its own reduced role (i.e., decentralized approaches to centralized outcomes). From an institutional standpoint, this ironic aspect further complicates the distinction between participant/non-participant and further emphasizes the primacy of institutional power in dictating who participates as well as how and why.

Finally, the connection between participation and finance cannot be overstated. In the documents analyzed in this article, the federal government's primary role is seen as setting the stage for a broader approach to housing finance that relied on the federal government to arrange a market. Reflecting diversity marketing, the Task Force stated, "The principle of using federal funds to leverage other investment is key to the new partnership and a new element in federal housing policy" (HUD, 1988, p. 11). The members

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of the Task Force recommended "direct expenditures in the forms of loans and grants to reduce the capital cost of housing; rental assistance … tax incentives … federal insurance and guarantees" (HUD, 1988, p. 11). Moreover, they asserted, "The federal government has been an essential partner—sometimes a silent partner—by providing low-income tax credits, tax-exempt financing, rental assistance and below market-rate loans that make projects feasible and affordable to the poor" (HUD, 1988, p. 19). Similarly, the Task Force advocated that, "To encourage maximum participation by all sectors of the housing delivery system, including private and nonprofit developers, public housing authorities should be permitted to use up to 25 percent of [federally provided] funds" (HUD, 1988, p. 20). In other words, the legitimation used in HOPE VI relied on an institutional omnipotence that manifested in both the program's rhetoric as well as the program's material outcomes.

The sprawl of financialization matched the sprawl of institutional involvement. This involvement was seemingly based on the imperative of one institution—the federal government. Underscoring the federal government's omnipotent role in assuming the risk burden of America's expanding mortgage and finance systems, *A Decent Place to Live* reads, "The federal housing finance system has evolved into an efficient mechanism for linking the mortgage market with domestic and international capital markets" (HUD, 1988, p. 52). Despite the assumption of federal risk and the proliferation of federal funds, however, the Task Force recommended a "minimum of regulation and maximum of flexibility to meet distinctive local housing needs" (HUD, 1988, p. 19). In the state's such mystified institutional reach lies the theodicean aspect of HOPE VI's participation: the coordination of financial instruments and funding across a multitude of organizations, with the backing of the federal government. For participatory rhetorics, more broadly, theodicean qualities potentially obscure the determinative roles that participating organizations play in facilitating the harms those same organizations seek to solve. On the one hand, participatory rhetorics can obscure the central, God-like powers (material, institutional, or discursive) at work in certain programs and initiatives. On the other hand, participatory rhetorics can leverage that tendency to obscure either by diffusing accountability throughout wider systems

or by ascribing primary agency to one entity. The potential harm is that those most vulnerable or subject to institutional imperative are denied both recognition and recompense.

CONCLUSION

HUD still relies on participation as a managerial tool for navigating racialization and marginalization. In January 2023, for instance, HUD proposed a new rule for "strengthening the participation of Tribes and Tribal organizations in HUD's housing counseling program" (HUD, 2023, para. 2). The rule essentially expands eligibility for those wanting to be federal housing counselors to include greater Native representation in housing counseling programs for Native Americans. HUD framed the proposed rule itself as an increase in participation, but the department also pointed to participatory methods like "consultation and listening sessions" with Native organizations as especially productive in bringing about the proposal. Skepticism, however, abounded during at least one of the listening sessions. An audience member questioned HUD's methodology, arguing that, "HUD's generic utilization of a counseling program contrived 28 years before tribes had the tools to develop our own programs is wrought with issues" (HUD, 2021, p. 9). The audience member continued that "even though fair housing laws do not apply in tribal communities, the burdensome requirements placed on tribes to comply with outdated legislation in effect creates and further perpetuates a notably unfair housing climate for reservation-based communities" (HUD, 2021, p. 9). The exchange highlights persistent tension in institutional and organizational deployments of participation: participatory rhetoric and methods have reinscribed the hierarchal difference it seeks to confront. To be sure, information derived from participatory methods can be useful for practitioners and researchers. For marginalized people, however, such labor is at once both a step removed from and an acute reminder of the realities of exclusion.

This article began with a question: "How do organizations mobilize conceptions of diversity and participation to navigate racial and cultural difference in public engagement?" In seeking a satisfactory answer, I have analyzed the rhetoric of a participatory federal housing program for discourses related to

participation, neoliberal governance, and racialization. Four legitimation strategies were identified. First, participatory discourses often rely on cultural narratives that validate mainstream or larger values. In the case of HOPE VI, its cultural narrative was homeownership in relation to values like the American Dream and socioeconomic agency. Second, participatory discourses retain a bio/necropolitical character, as the exigence for participatory approaches is usually to address some threat, physical, cultural, or otherwise that the state or institution must address with an interventionist stance. For HOPE VI, the threats invoked are crime, drugs, violence, and low moral capacity, which, in context, invariably carry racialized meanings. Attaching economic and cultural deficit to certain populations legitimates interventionism that figures said populations as wards of institutional imperative. Moreover, such discourse naturalizes racial and segregationist consequences, since, "While recognizing that media-produced terms such as 'gang banger' and 'welfare queen' refer to the racial/gendered subalterns, they read them as codes for racial difference that mask the racially exclusionary aims of the legislation and policy initiatives these terms are deployed to support" (Silva, 2007, p. 264). Third, participatory discourses function as diversity marketing—not just racially or ethnically, but also organizationally. In the HOPE VI literature, in fact, diversity is an institutionalist concern rather than a communitarian one. Lastly, participatory discourses carry a theodicean quality, in that participatory institutionalism can obscure or absolve institutions of their uniquely determinative roles in complex systems.

Despite its implications of democracy and service, participation has historically been imbued with issues of power that should prompt researchers to continue interrogating the origins, motivations, and effects of one of the field's most prominently discussed methodologies in relation to social justice. Haas and Eble (2018) defined the social justice turn in technical and professional communication as a "turn toward a collective disciplinary redressing of social injustice sponsored by rhetorics and practices that infringe upon, neglect, withhold, and/or abolish human, non-human animal, and environmental rights" (p. 5). Additionally, they argue social justice practitioners should pursue "more critical understandings of … systems of and rhetorics of hegemonic power—and how and why they have historically shaped how we regard specific cultures

and communities in relation to their technical and scientific expertise or lack thereof" (2018, p. 12). In another contribution to the social justice turn, Moore (2018) advocates for "participatory design, participatory action research, and the many approaches to teaching students to ethically engage with communities …. [in contrast to] top-down decision-making and design structures" (p. 193). Rose and Cardinal (2021) maintain that "Choosing a more participatory approach shifts the perspective that people are research subjects or sources of information to one where they are collaborators and co-designers" because doing so, in their view, "allows the people who are engaged in the research endeavor to have more agency and say in the process" (p. 85).

But what does it say about a methodology that purports a social justice aim on one hand but on the other relies on processes of institutional mediation to negotiate the limits of agency? Given that participation assumes immutable difference, is participation just diversity management, and if so, in what ways does participation re-entrench notions of undesirability as applied to racialized or economically otherized subjects? To what degree has participation become so institutionalized that its methods and rhetorics allow neoliberal governmentality to continue, as one critic observed, "incorporating its own critiques …. absorbing and partially neutralising disruptive difference, turned into governable, benign difference?" (Bilge, 2020, p. 326). The legitimation strategies discussed in this article suggest that technical communicators have a far from benign role in potentially perpetuating benign difference.

The imperative for designers and communicators to turn a critical lens upon ourselves is salient amid the neoliberal trend to institutionalize social justice. Participation, as a broader organizational approach, evokes the entrenched frameworks of diversity and inclusion, which critical scholars have identified as often working against the people they purport to help. Nash (2019), for instance, claims that the university's incorporation of difference is a "key rhetoric animating an institution's self-presentation and organization [while signifying] an institution's own commitment to inclusion …. as evidence of an institution's transformation" (p. 23). Similarly, Ahmed (2012) argues that "to work for institutions, as practitioners do, can require that you develop a habit of talking mission talk, what we can call 'happy talk,' a way of telling a

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happy story of the institution that is at once a story of the institution as happy" (p. 10). What's lost in happy talk is often the symbolic and material violences carried out in the institution's perpetuation. In Ahmed's study of diversity, for example, she assesses that diversity facilitates the institutionalization of Whiteness, with recruitment functioning "as a technology for the reproduction of whiteness" (2012, p. 39). Participation can function in much the same way, since after all, participants are recruited. Thus, I ask further, how might participation function as a technology for the reproduction of marginalization? Is participation a method for change; or, is it bound to institutionalism—hyperpragmatist in its unique ability to avoid being critically understood as such?

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Participation, diversity, and legitimation

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"Unreasonable" Bodies: Thinking Beyond Accommodation in Workplace Lactation Law and Policy

By Danielle De Arment-Donohue

ABSTRACT

Purpose: This article investigates why workplace lactation law, guidance, and policy may fail to support women. It examines the epistemological and ethical bases of technical communication governing Virginia K–12 teachers and considers complex material conditions and opportunities for social justice intervention.

Method: I employed a qualitative critical discourse analysis of three Virginia codes governing workplace lactation and one state human resources guidance document, examining their interaction with the Federal Labor Standards Act and 10 local school district policies. I drew on Technical and Professional Communication (TPC) social justice scholarship, disability studies, and apparent feminism scholarship to interpret my findings.

Results: Documents governing workplace lactation are based on an ableist mindset that marginalizes women's bodies. They prioritize an ethic of expediency, draw on medical knowledge while ignoring women's knowledge and material conditions, and perpetuate systemic inequities.

Conclusion: To promote social justice, technical communicators should continue questioning the epistemological and ethical bases of laws, policies, and guidance since documents informed by knowledge and ideologies that devalue the people they purport to protect will fail in implementation. Local policymakers need not wait for institutional changes but can look for opportunities to reimagine design approaches and intervene to create supportive, inclusive workplaces.

Keywords: Workplace Lactation, Technical Communication, Social Justice, Apparent Feminism, Disability Studies

Practitioner's Takeaway:

- To avoid perpetuating systemic inequities, technical communicators (TCs) should evaluate epistemological and ethical underpinnings of existing policies and question whose knowledge documents silence.
- Those designing local workplace policies can look to expand worker support and inclusivity, especially when federal or state agencies create gaps through vague language or absences and/or defer to their authority.
- TCs may seize opportunities to create more equitable workplaces by employing human-centered participatory design, drawing on apparent feminism to increase stakeholder support, and reallocating resources.

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INTRODUCTION

In 2010, I stood in a faculty bathroom at my job teaching night school in a large, well-funded Virginia public school district, listening to my breast pump's rhythmic whomps. I had taken a leave of absence (a privilege many do not have) from my full-time high school teaching job when my son was born because I couldn't figure out how to navigate early motherhood and devote myself to work. Keeping what had been a second job allowed me to continue doing what I loved. Thankful for a flat surface to rest my pump on, I tried to relax as I leaned against the cracked chest of drawers someone had brought in to house teachers' hygiene products. The minutes between my two classes ticked away. Someone knocked, and I hollered, "Occupied!" I remember feeling guilty about taking up this space for the whole break, stressed I wasn't producing enough milk, and worried about finishing this job to get back to the work of teaching down the hall.

Many women are torn between the good mother ideal (Hausman, 2012) and workplace norms (Spitzmueller et al., 2018), creating an impossible tension between caring for their children and their professional duties, especially when institutions fail to recognize the labor that childcare requires. The incompatibility of these two ideals reinforces Durack's (1997) problematization of the "dualistic thinking that severs public and private, household and industry, and masculine and feminine labor" (p. 257).

Breastfeeding has been historically characterized by shifting epistemological tensions between the medical field, cultural and social forces, and women. Early scholarship on breastfeeding rhetoric (Hausman, 2000; Koerber, 2005, 2006a, 2006b) traces tensions that emerged as the medical community, which formerly embraced the measurable technology of bottle-feeding, reckoned with science demonstrating human milk's health benefits, leading organizations like the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) in 1997 to declare it the "normative" standard for infant feeding (Koerber, 2006a). While establishing a norm may problematically position those who are unable to breastfeed, even those who are able and interested are often stymied by social and cultural forces. Today, the AAP (2022) recommends six months of exclusive breastfeeding and encourages continuing along with solid foods, citing benefits beyond one year for children but also mothers,

who can experience protections from diseases such as diabetes and cancer. They also call for policies that protect against "workplace barriers" (para. 5).

Kindergarten through 12th grade (K–12) public school teachers are in a particularly complex position due to the nature of their workplaces and exemption from the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) because they do not qualify for overtime. In March 2010, the FLSA was amended to require employers provide reasonable break time and "a place, other than a bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from coworkers and the public, which may be used by an employee to express breast milk" (U.S. Department of Labor, r.1). The U.S. Department of Labor (2010) "encourages employers" to provide breaks to employees not covered under FLSA and directs them to state laws (Reasonable Break Time). As of August 2021, 30 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico have laws governing breastfeeding in the workplace (NCSL, 2021).

Virginia recently added workplace lactation legislation, yet when I returned to teach in a small, rural district from 2017–2021, I witnessed women continuing to struggle to pump while maintaining professional expectations. Hausman et al. (2012) shed light on why many women do not end up breastfeeding—a path more common for Black and poor women. They describe how the "Social-Ecological Model" in public health considers social influences and how "choice paradigms" paint women as simply making choices in a bubble, uninfluenced by cultural and social forces around them (p. 6). This framing helps explain why, despite some legal efforts to acknowledge individuals' needs, women still face challenges. Studying technical documents reveals how existing power structures sustain injustice and marginalization and uncovers opportunities for technical communicators (TCs) to intervene (Agboka & Dorpenyo, 2022; Walwema & Carmichael, 2021). My qualitative study draws on feminist scholarship and disability studies, employing critical discourse analysis (CDA) of recent Virginia law, guidance, and policies, to discover:

- How do Virginia workplace lactation laws and guidance position employees, employers, and knowledge of lactation practices?
- What values do documents governing workplace lactation espouse?

- What factors complicate the implementation of lactation law, guidance, and policy in Virginia K–12 public schools?

To answer these questions, I review relevant scholarship; describe my methods and application of CDA; and discuss my findings, which reveal how state technical documents: (1) position lactation as a disability and signal whose bodies are welcome and unwelcome in the workplace, (2) are driven by an ethic of expediency that prioritizes institutions' economic bottom-lines and productivity over women's and children's well-being, and (3) position employers as judges, privileging medical knowledge while disregarding women's experiential knowledge and material conditions. Examining Virginia K–12 teachers' working conditions, especially since the Covid-19 pandemic, highlights problems many industries face, such as staffing shortages and aging buildings with space limitations, conditions that disproportionately impact BIPOC women, who may face additional discrimination. I conclude by building on existing scholarship to suggest how TCs can reevaluate existing policies' epistemological foundations to create more equitable workplaces by drawing on human-centered design and apparent feminism, which "invites participation from allies who do not identify as feminist but do complementary work" (Frost, 2018, p. 27).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Technical Documentation and Injustice

Recent turns toward cultural and social justice in technical professional communication (TPC) scholarship have exposed the myth of the apolitical, neutral technical document (Rose, 2016; Jones & Williams, 2017; Sims, 2022). Walwema and Carmichael (2021) urge TPC scholars to examine the language of documents with high stakes to see whom they privilege and marginalize. Jones and Williams (2022) encourage scrutiny of documents to record and question what is missing to account for silenced voices and actively seek information to address gaps. These approaches help unearth values and epistemological bases of workplace lactation documents.

Steven Katz (1992) focuses on people documents affect, warning TCs about the consequences of an ethic of expediency. His analysis of a Nazi memo

reminds us that writing in a technically proficient manner preoccupied with maintaining an organization's ethos can have dire impacts. An ethic of expediency dominates legal language and guidance governing lactation, creating problematic consequences for women in workplaces. Kimberly Harper's (2020) critical discourse analysis of legal decisions and pregnancy literature reveals the centering of white motherhood and the silencing and maligning of Black mothers, exposing how biases in policy and implementation lead to life-threatening vulnerabilities and inequities.

Scholars such as Sims (2022) focus on human-centered design approaches and the action component of social justice in TPC. Such methods would counter the institutional ethos that has been passed down through reiterated language from the federal to state to local level in workplace lactation documents. Colton and Holmes (2018) call for TCs not to passively await institutional changes but actively seek justice and equity "within, alongside, and beyond institutional redress" (p. 21).

Disability Studies Lens

Though lactation is not considered a disability, the legal sphere discusses lactation in terms of limitations and accommodations. This common language and lactation's liminal positioning makes aspects of disability studies particularly relevant to analyzing ideological underpinnings in legal and cultural views of the lactating body. In examining how TPC practices marginalize people with disabilities, Jason Palmeri (2006) discusses how "technical communication participates in the discursive process of normalization: legitimating and subjugating knowledges, examining and controlling workplace practices, forming subjectivities, and marking bodies as normal or deviant" (p. 49). Bennett (2022) calls on those in TPC to consider documents' sociopolitical implications through ableist studies and disability justice, highlighting the problematic individualized view of disability that puts the onus on each worker to conform to a standard workplace. Such an attitude prevents systemic changes that could lead to more equitable conditions.

Workplace lactation requires rethinking spaces, and Dolmage's (2017) idea of "the retrofit" explains how ableist framing of spatial accommodations marginalizes people. He uses this metaphor to demonstrate how accommodations in higher education are often inadequate and emblematic of larger systemic problems

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since they attempt to "'fix' spaces" that have not been constructed for a variety of bodies. He argues, "retrofits are not designed for people to live and thrive with a disability, but rather to temporarily make the disability go away." He points out how these accommodations—in an attempt to address structural ableism—end up "accentuat[ing] and invit[ing] disablism" when individuals must single themselves out, taking on risk due to the power imbalance associated with asking for assistance (p. 70). Such issues play out under current governance of workplace lactation as individuals approach supervisors and navigate traditional spaces and expectations.

Roles of Feminist Scholarship

When applied to documents governing workplace lactation, feminist scholarship—both directly and indirectly related to lactation practices—helps lead TPC scholars and practitioners toward interventions by uncovering hidden values that marginalize women. Peterson and Walton (2018) call on researchers to employ feminist methods to draw attention to silences, absences, and delegitimized expertise in an effort to correct injustices (p. 425). Koerber (2006b) has examined how privileging medical expertise has devalued women's knowledge, despite Wylie's (2004) concept of inversion thesis that suggests how women's experiences make them "epistemically privileged in some crucial respects" (Peterson & Walton, 2018, p. 424). In this case, teacher-mothers have invaluable, untapped tacit knowledge.

Further, Koerber (2005) describes how medical discourse favors regularity, consistency, and ideas of "normal" inherently at odds with women's bodies, which are marked by fluctuation, changes, and variations deemed "irregular or abnormal" when judged by these standards (p. 309). Legal systems' and industries' use of medical knowledge as the epistemological basis for law and policy, compounded by an ethic of expediency prioritizing financial gain, further devalues individuals' experiential knowledge. In their study of how institutional documents lead to trans oppression in shelters, Moeggenberg et al. (2022) note, "Through their erasure of difference and … singular focus on efficiency and expediency (Frost, 2016), technical communication genres can unwittingly reflect dominant ideologies through supporting neoliberal agendas (Harvey, 2007)" (p. 407). Laws and HR

guidance are similarly informed by rigid conceptions of norms and privilege workplace authorities' judgment and priorities.

If the ultimate goal is creating more inclusive workplaces that are set up ideologically, systemically, and spatially to support women, employing Frost's (2016) apparent feminism offers ways to intervene because it stresses "being explicit about feminist identity in response to socially unjust situations," (p. 407) making it well-suited to address workplace lactation—an issue long-relegated to the private sphere that receives pushback in public spaces. Public attention is currently focused on teacher shortages and working conditions, creating an opportune moment to make visible the difficulties teacher-mothers experience and gather allies outside of those who identify as feminists.

Peterson and Walton (2018) encourage TCs to address "gendered challenges" (p. 420). My methods are limited to analyzing discourse affecting all people who lactate, but I encourage readers to keep in mind the variety of bodies in workplaces. Research with different methods could better focus on the experiences of those who are most vulnerable such as BIPOC and trans or non-binary people.

METHODOLOGY

Virginia public schools serve as a model of many workplaces that are governed by layers of hierarchical laws, guidance, policies, and local contexts where implementation occurs. Since these are highly connected, I draw on Fairclough's (1992) three-dimensional view of critical discourse analysis, which emphasizes intertextuality and focuses on analysis of context, text production and interpretation, and the text itself. This approach is relevant due to the intertextual relationships between the three levels of hierarchical text involved in governing workplace responses to lactating teachers—federal, state, and local school districts—but CDA also aids in unearthing the values, ideologies, and power dynamics inherent in these documents and how they are implemented in local contexts. Walwema and Carmichael (2021) employ this approach to study U.S. labor and immigration laws' relationship to hiring documents, highlighting the rhetoric's ecological nature and exposing how language can exclude.

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Data Collection

To develop my dataset, I first searched for Virginia law related to workplace lactation and guidance from the state's human resources department concerned with implementing workplace lactation. Three codes and a policy document were most relevant to this study's scope and goals:

- §2.2-3909, "Causes of action for failure to provide reasonable accommodation for known limitations related to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions," is part of the Virginia Human Rights Act passed in July 2020, and lays out what is required of employers.
- §22.1-79.6, "Employee lactation support policy," effective 2014, mandates each local school district create its own policy.
- §2.2-1201.14b, "Duties of Department; Director," states Virginia's HR director shall develop personnel policies related to break time for nursing mothers and lays out stipulations for these policies.
- Virginia State Human Resources Department's (VDHR) website offers a document, "Breaks for Nursing Mothers–Resource Guide," published in 2019 to provide more guidance for employers than the law supplies with a question and answer format.

These documents are the second layer of a hierarchy of documentation (See Figure 1). To understand how they relate to the top and bottom of the hierarchy, I compared them to the Federal Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and local policies from 10 school districts, representing each of Virginia's Department of Education's (VDOE) eight superintendent regions.

Data Analysis

I employed three stages of analysis to provide an ecological perspective. First, I examined the FLSA's language in order to code state language that repeats federal law and determine how state laws and guidance echo and/or differ from federal standards. To study the implementation of code §22.1-79.6, which requires school districts to create a lactation policy, I examined 10 local policies. Eight of these were remarkably brief and simply repeated state language.

In the second stage, I analyzed the three Virginia legal codes, HR resource guide, and district policies according to the tenets of CDA (Johnstone, 2008).
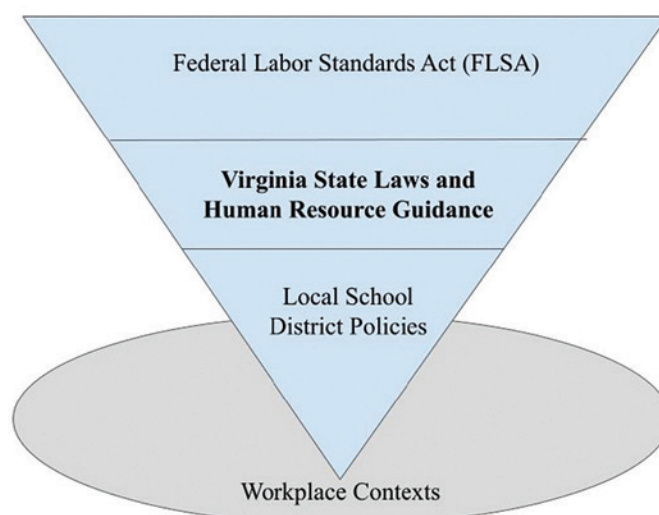

Figure 1: Hierarchy of workplace lactation governance

Drawing on Jones et al.'s (2016) positionality, power, and privilege, I considered how their language positions employers and employees in addition to coding wording choices and the documents' epistemological underpinnings. I made three passes of the data, refining my codes each time. Segments were almost always one sentence or shorter, and I employed simultaneous coding when one sentence or phrase surfaced more than one code.

Analyzing three hierarchical levels of texts assisted in understanding how local contexts are ultimately governed, but to better consider implementational complexity, in the last phase of analysis, I considered how references to time and space—two prominent codes that emerged—relate to current workplace contexts in Virginia public school buildings. Consulting information from the VDOE and National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) afforded a view of current challenges in worksites.

FINDINGS

CDA of the three Virginia legal codes and the HR guidance document yielded patterns demonstrating epistemological underpinnings, values, and positioning of employers and employees (See Table 1).

Since the documents discuss when and where breaks will occur, the codes *time* and *space* were frequent, with 40 instances of *time*. Though related, I limited *time* to practical matters of application that create boundaries

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regarding when workers may take breaks and for how long and identified *expediency* as language related to protecting employers from undue financial or other hardships, which occurred 14 times. Language explaining how to handle *space* and physical work conditions occurred 19 times in the HR guidance document since it clarifies what is and is not required for employers in a variety of work environments. The guidance document presents four occurrences of *encouraged/optional accommodations* beyond legal requirements.

Reiterations of federal law appeared 16 times, demonstrating adherence to previous approaches from

Table 1: Instances and examples of coded language in Virginia legal codes §2.2-3909, §2.2-1201.14b, and §22.1-79.6 and HR guidance document, "Breaks for Nursing Mothers—Resource Guide"

Codes, Explanations, and Examples	Virginia Legal Codes	HR Guidance Document	Total
Reasonable	16	10	26
Mentions/defines what is considered "reasonable" • "'Reasonable accommodation' includes more frequent or longer bathroom breaks" (Also coded as *Time*.)			
Expediency	7	7	14
Language related to protecting employers from undue financial/other hardship • "In determining whether an accommodation would constitute an undue hardship on the employer, the following shall be considered: (1) Hardship on the conduct of the employer's business…"			
Time	15	25	40
Providing definitions/expectations for time related to breaks or the temporary nature of accommodations • "until the child reaches the age of one"			
Space	5	19	24
Setting aside or altering space or physical work conditions • "Where it is not practicable for an employer to provide a room, the requirement can be met by creating a space with partitions or curtains." (Also *employer as judge*)			
Limitation	6	0	6
Figures lactation as a bodily limitation; must be made "known" to the employer • "No employer shall: (1) Refuse to make reasonable accommodation to the known limitations of a person related to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions, unless…" (Also *reasonable*; *medical*)			
Employer as Judge	6	3	9
Explicitly or implicitly positions the employer as the judge of what employees need or will receive • "if such accommodation is determined not to be reasonable, discuss alternative accommodations that may be provided." (Also *reasonable*) • "unless the employer can demonstrate that the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the employer" (Also *expediency*)			
Reiterating Federal Law	9	7	16
Restates language from the Federal Labor Standards Act • "Any windows in the designated room or space should be covered to ensure the space is 'shielded from view.'" (Quotes federal law.) • "access to a private location other than a bathroom for the expression of breast milk" (Echoes federal law.)			
Medical Knowledge	7	5	12
Uses medical information to set a norm, explain, or justify • "As the child grows and begins to consume solid foods, typically around six months of age, the frequency of nursing often decreases" (Also *time*.)			
Encouraged/Optional Accommodations	0	4	4
Suggests possible accommodations beyond legal requirements • "In order to accommodate significant numbers of nursing mothers, some large employers may choose to include nursing mothers' rooms in their floor plans and provide a room on multiple floors…" (Also *space*)			

the top of the hierarchy. In total, 26 segments of text define and clarify what is *reasonable*, which is one way the documents echo legal language associated with disabilities in addition to the six times the legal codes figure lactation as a bodily *limitation* that must be made known to the employer. I found language positioning the *employer as a judge* nine times in the documents and language associated with *medical knowledge,* which sets a norm and/or explains or justifies, 12 times.

DISCUSSION

Figuring Lactation as a Disability

Lactation occupies a complex position in the legal sphere, which defines it as a medical condition related to pregnancy and childbirth. Lactation is not accounted for in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), but language associated with disability and a deficit conception of lactation are evident throughout these documents, which refer to employers' "limitations" in the legal codes and center the notion of "reasonable accommodation." Women's bodies are still marginalized and viewed as problematic in the workplace—even where they occupy majority status as in the 76% female K–12 education field (NCES, 2018).

In alignment with Palmeri's (2006) points about technical documents setting "norms" and defining deviant bodies, Virginia's legal codes and HR guidance employ medical knowledge to set standards and expectations for what employers should consider "normal," such as the guide's answer to how long breaks should be, which explains, "the act of expressing breast milk alone typically takes about 15-20 minutes" (VDHR, p. 2). Many bodies do not conform to this timeline, which is associated with a high-quality double-pump, highlighting a possible socioeconomic inequity. People in high-stress jobs may find letdown (the release of milk) takes longer due to the relaxation it often requires. If individuals are dehydrated or spending meal breaks pumping, they will face further difficulty (La Leche League International, 2022). The guide next offers one of two considerations accounting for employees' material conditions, mentioning other factors such as the length of time it may take to "walk"—note another normative assumption—to the lactation space, fetch their pump from its stored location, or access a sink (VDHR, p. 2).

These are vital concerns, and the document cites the Department of Labor's consideration of all "steps reasonably necessary" when assessing the reasonableness of break time; however, these ideas are complicated when the document states workers do not need to be compensated for break time unless it coincides "with other breaks considered to be work hours and last[s] for 20 minutes or less." Additional material conditions are overshadowed by this language: "If the employee uses significant additional time, the employer should permit the employee to adjust her [sic] schedule to make up the time, charge appropriate leave time as necessary, or to be docked for that additional time" (VDHR, p. 4). This sets up the employee to possibly attempt to rush the process, which could result in getting an infection or contamination, taking a financial penalty, resigning, or deciding breastfeeding is not possible if they cannot fit the norm presented.

Bennett (2022) examines various warrants related to disability such as the notion of "bodymind as able," exposing how such assumptions "perpetuate problematic understandings of disability as a personal issue" and allow employers to create "individual accommodations to align individuals with a standard work environment, rather than environmental changes to include … individuals as they are" (p. 232). The guidance document contains five questions about lactation space, which emphasize worries about a lack of resources to accommodate lactating employees. Answers reassure employers they are "not obligated to maintain a permanent, dedicated space for nursing mothers" (VDHR, p. 2). Rather than having a visible, dedicated space, the document repeatedly informs employers of just how little they need to do. For example, where no room is available, they can "creat[e] a space with partitions or curtains," and they do not have to provide refrigeration but must allow workers to bring their own cold storage (VDHR, p. 3).

Dolmage's (2017) notion of retrofitting is key to current workplace lactation approaches. Since the ADA passed in 1990, the public has begun to understand disability in terms of space, yet he notes temporary accommodations are based on a "compliance" orientation toward disability that allows access but precludes "the possibility of action for change" (p. 77). Accommodations that are temporary after-thoughts preserve traditional notions of the workplace as a space designed for non-disabled, masculine bodies.

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Imagine schools where lactation spaces were permanent, visible fixtures women could count on without special accommodation when planning a family.

"Accommodation" is also a key concept in David Dobrin's (1983) definition of technical communication as "writing that accommodates technology to the user," which scholars have challenged (p. 227). Scott (2018) asserts, "Rather than asking how we can accommodate users," TCs should "ask how we can responsively redress those users who are marginalized by technical communication through the redistribution of resources (technological, rhetorical, and otherwise)" (p. 306). In underfunded workplaces, this orientation opens up possibilities for both how TCs might rethink the process of writing policy to make it more human-centered and participatory and consider how to reallocate resources to meet the needs of the people policies affect, in addition to the community impacted when employees resign.

Ethic of Expediency

Increasing expenditures heighten institutions' anxiety, and employers may see the law as an unfunded mandate. The state attempts to reassure employers by emphasizing an ethic of expediency. In addition to stressing the bare minimum for compliance, the guidance document lists accommodations that can be made such as adding a lactation room to the floor plan if there are many people to accommodate, providing refrigeration, "ideally" having electricity to run a pump, and having a sink nearby for the employee to wash their hands and pump equipment. It states, "While such additional features are not required, providing such spaces may decrease the amount of break time needed," emphasizing the reason for including them would be to increase work time, rather than considering human needs, and framing accommodations as creature comforts rather than ways to facilitate health, reduce stress, and support employees as humans (VDHR, p. 3). Such an attitude is reminiscent of Steven Katz's (1992) point that "[i]n a capitalistic society, technological expediency often takes precedence over human convenience, and sometimes even human life" (p. 207).

While code §2.2-3909 states employers cannot refuse "reasonable accommodation" for lactating employees, they do not have to make an accommodation if they can demonstrate it "would pose an undue hardship" on the employer, which would only be necessary to prove if the employee pursued legal action. The definition of "undue hardship" includes:

(1) Hardship on the conduct of the employer's business, considering the nature of the employer's operation, including composition and structure of the employer's workforce;

(2) The size of the facility where employment occurs; and

(3) The nature and cost of the accommodations needed. (VHRA, B.1)

The language is concerned with the employer's ability to remain productive and avoid financial strain and is sufficiently vague, so it is unclear what constitutes a cost that would preclude the accommodation. Such uncertainty may dissuade an employee from pursuing legal action.

Katz (1992) explains when we are overly concerned with the "'efficient' operation" of a system, we can fail "the people the system is supposed to serve." State documents governing and guiding workplace lactation reiterate and reinforce federal law, attempt to mitigate financial worries, and emphasize minimal accommodations, echoing Katz's point that "[i]n any highly bureaucratic, technological, capitalistic society, it is often the human being who must adapt to the system" (p. 207). The capitalistic underpinnings of the documents position women as secondary to the financial impacts on the organization's ability to conduct business as usual.

Employer as Judge

Katz (1992) also extends his argument to how technical communication governs deliberative discourse about "what should or should not be done," tending to base decisions on expediency (p. 200). Legal code §2.2-3909 offers this language that sets the stage for deliberative discourse:

Each employer shall engage in a timely, good faith interactive process with an employee who has requested an accommodation pursuant to this section to determine if the requested accommodation is reasonable and, if such accommodation is determined not to be reasonable, discuss alternative accommodations that may be provided. (VHRA, C)

The employer's communication is required to be "timely," in "good faith," and "interactive," suggesting a discursive process with a back-and-forth. Yet, the second half of the sentence reveals the purpose is for the employer to judge the reasonableness of any requested accommodation. As Katz reminds us, the ethic of expediency underlying "deliberative rhetoric can be made to serve exclusively the technological interests of "the State" (p. 207). The documents figure the employer not as a supportive colleague but as the guardian of the organization's resources.

The guidance document establishes norms from which employers can make decisions about individuals, leaving those individuals' input potentially undervalued. The basic nature of medical knowledge the documents reference indicates the audience, employers who assess what is reasonable, includes those with little to no familiarity with women's bodies. For this and other reasons—their relationship with the supervisor, embarrassment, desire to be a "good worker"—women may not approach their supervisors. Similarly, Dolmage (2017) notes the ADA places the responsibility on the individual seeking accommodations, "admitting that dominant pedagogies privilege those who can most easily ignore their bodies" (p. 80).

Jones et al.'s (2016) positionality, privilege, and power concepts that "impact social capital and agency" in their framework for more inclusive TPC research, remind us to consider the context of these discussions (p. 220), which require lactating employees discuss an intimate aspect of their bodies in the workplace with someone in a position of power. Though 76% of 3.5 million K–12 teachers are female, as of 2020, a mere 27% of superintendents were female (AASA, 2020). Of 10 school district policies, six make the superintendent responsible for the lactation space. The gender disparity may contribute to power imbalances and a possible lack of understanding of the material and embodied realities employees face.

Additionally, Jones et al. (2016) remind us of intersectional considerations and how multiply-marginalized individuals encounter compounded difficulties. In 2018, 79% of teachers identified as white (NCES, 2021). The odds are that BIPOC employees will be having these conversations with white supervisors, exacerbating problematic power dynamics. Harper (2020) uncovers how the "welfare queen" trope positions Black mothers as opportunistic

or criminal for seeking the same advantages as white mothers. Moeggenberg et al. (2022) examine the problematic nature of "good faith" in documents that allow discrimination against trans individuals, asserting they align "'good faith belief' with scrutinization of another's body" to determine their fate (p. 421). In code §2.2-3909, employees are subject to their supervisor's judgment of whether their bodily needs are reasonable, regardless of biases or lactation knowledge.

With disabilities, once an attempt at accommodation has been made, Dolmage (2017) explains there is typically no "feedback loop;" instead, the individual seeking accommodations is supposed to be "thankful" regardless of the accommodation's efficacy (p. 81). Similarly, the code's framework for the process closes after any accommodation decision, regardless of efficacy.

Passing Power Down the Hierarchy

Fairclough (1992) calls texts "sensitive barometers of social processes," asserting intertextual analysis can indicate social and cultural change (p. 211). The Department of Labor states, "The FLSA does not preempt State or local laws that provide greater protections to employers (Fact Sheet #73, para. 4). This language passes power to the state level, opening the door for further support, and while it sounds promising, the state law—though it requires break time for workers who are exempt from the FLSA—in large part simply reiterates the federal language. It also requires local school districts to develop policies of their own, but a sample of those policies demonstrates how few districts take concerted action beyond state requirements, missing opportunities to use local knowledge and teacher input in the policy design process. This example is similar to eight of the 10 policies that are one-two sentences and reiterate state language:

> The Superintendent shall designate a non-restroom location in each school as an area in which any mother who is employed by the County … may take breaks of reasonable length during the school day to express milk to feed her [sic] child until the child reaches the age of one. The area must be shielded from public view. (Frederick County Public Schools)

When the policy and guidance are sparse and merely reiterative, public school administrators must

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negotiate supporting employees in their particular contexts on their own. As an exception to these anemic policies, Fairfax County's comparatively robust policy contains words like "support" and "collaborate" and references a lactation support program. This is one of the wealthiest districts in the state, but it may serve as a model.

Space, Time, and the Nature of the Job

All three levels setting law and policy mandate a space that is not a bathroom, which is "shielded from view," "private," or "free from intrusion from coworkers and the public," depending on the document. The HR guidance document addresses some difficulties with providing space in localities when it suggests using partitions or curtains and achieving privacy "through means such as signs that designate when the space is in use, or a lock on the door" (p. 3). In schools, curtains and a sign will not guarantee privacy in an environment where children, some of whom cannot read, are present.

Spatial concerns are exacerbated in overcrowded workplaces with shared space. Virginia schools highlight these problems since 40.5% of buildings are currently at or above capacity and 29.4% more are nearing capacity (Dickey & Ramnarain, 2021, slide 7). Over half of schools are more than 50 years old, and only 78% comply with the ADA (slides 8, 13). Although some newer buildings may have been designed with lactation spaces, this is not a current requirement, so most are subject to retrofitting.

Even when buildings have a dedicated lactation space, without organizational support, it may not be effective. Porter and Oliver (2016) examine how a program that set aside lactation spaces at Virginia Tech missed opportunities to create larger discussions about gender equity since space alone is not sufficient to create a supportive climate at work without "a continued conversation" among the workplace community (p. 82). They warn ensuring privacy and seclusion alone risks "closet[ing] lactation as a female-body specific act to maintain the universal disembodied individual" (p. 88). Individuals facing lactation issues must not be expected to take on the additional burden of the public conversations required to fully include them in the workplace to achieve gender equity. We need apparent feminism here—the support of others, especially those who have not experienced lactation—to help create these conversations.

Where time is concerned, though law and guidance reiterate that employers must allow break time, neither federal nor Virginia state law requires compensation. Lucas and McCarter-Spaulding's (2012) examination of factors impacting breastfeeding and employment reveals "often policy solutions and supportive workplaces assist those already privileged," and differences often intersect "with socially constructed class and race identities" (pp. 154, 144). For example, in the United States, Black women are less likely to breastfeed, and higher socioeconomic status is associated with longer breastfeeding rates, regardless of race. BIPOC women are underrepresented in careers where they may have space and time to express milk, and in teaching, they are more likely to face greater complexity in approaching supervisors for accommodations. Longer maternity leave is associated with longer breastfeeding, and returning to work "decreases breastfeeding initiation, duration, and exclusivity" (p. 145). Most teachers needing to maintain their income must return to work six weeks postpartum, increasing the need for lactation support at work if they intend to breastfeed. Policy application impacts individuals differently, creating ample opportunity to perpetuate systemic injustice and potential bias in one-on-one interactions between teachers and supervisors.

The very nature of the job further complicates break time since taking at least 20 minutes every three hours to pump is challenging without supportive supervisors and colleagues. Considering the career centers around caring for and instructing minors who cannot be left unattended, break time requires cooperative planning. Spitzmueller et al. (2018) find jobs with high workloads and requiring "mothers to be consistently and continuously mentally engaged in their work" make pumping difficult. They note highly regimented work schedules may offer well-spaced breaks conducive to pumping (p. 466). Teaching's workload often exceeds contract hours and requires constant mental engagement as teachers respond to individuals and re-plan on the fly to meet the group's needs. The schedule, while highly regimented, has few breaks, which are not necessarily evenly spaced. Elementary school teachers may only have one break during the day when students attend art, music, or P.E.

Hiring a floating substitute to cover classes is a useful strategy, which can help any employee who has an unplanned absence or needs to take a half-day to

tend to a sick child, but it's an added cost, and it may be difficult to maintain given shortages: at the start of the 2022–2023 school year, almost half of districts reported unfilled teaching jobs (St. George, 2022). Resignations were responsible for 51% of teacher vacancies, and substitute positions have become harder to fill (IES, 2022). It has become common for teachers to cover each other's classes, often without additional compensation, which positions lactating teachers as indebted, having infringed on another's planning time. Recent public attention on shortages makes conditions ripe for increasing support for teacher well-being initiatives.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

While the state has sanctioned an opportunity for school districts to offer further support through localized policies, districts tend to merely adopt the state's ethos and language, continuing to figure lactation as a disability, maintain the ethic of expediency, and ignore women's knowledge and material conditions. Studying how teachers have managed to make pumping work and how they struggled would offer institutions key information to better support women even in challenging contexts. In her study of Florida school district policies, Phillips (2020) finds private space, ample time, and supportive administrators and colleagues resulted in better teacher experiences. She recommends each school have its own policy to "fill the gap" left open by larger district and state policies and "reevaluate" them to ensure they "create a work environment that focuses on the teacher" (p. 110). While I agree, it is important to consider how leaving so much decision-making up to the individual site is a double-edged sword since local realities may require flexibility to meet women's needs, but federal and state language and guidance mandating supportive climates and attitudes would make support the expectation rather than the luck of the draw.

Yet, history shows waiting for larger systemic changes will leave women right where they are. In December 2010, the Department of Labor sought public input about the March 2010 Reasonable Break Time amendment to the FLSA because of requests for additional guidance, but determined "regulations may not be the most useful or effective means for providing initial guidance to employers and employees," citing

"the variety of workplace environments, work schedules, and individual factors that will impact the number and length of breaks required by a nursing mother, as well as the manner in which an employer complies with break time requirement" (para. 5). To date, no additional regulations have been instituted.

TCs need not wait for federal action to articulate local policies utilizing women's knowledge of material conditions in their buildings and their actual physical needs. Disappointed with the medical community's lack of information on exclusive pumping, McCaughey (2021) coins the term *tactical motherhood*, citing Holladay (2017), who suggests "'official' documents be reconsidered or rewritten to reflect the kinds of knowledge (and tactics)" women offer (pp. 34, 44). Further research gathering teacher-mothers' experiential knowledge will benefit policy-makers and is something I intend to pursue. As Jones and Williams (2022) suggest, scholars and TCs can learn from questioning and seeking out what is missing from technical documents. In many cases, participatory, human-centered design involving end-users at all phases of the design process and taking material conditions into account can begin to fill in those blanks. McKinley Green (2020) notes expanding our understanding of people beyond "their efficient and productive use" illuminates them as "individuals who navigate identities, commitments, and public beyond and apart from their interaction with technologies" (p. 333).

Workplace lactation documents in Virginia schools serve as a case study TCs can use to begin to question and discuss how epistemological and ethical bases of policies and guidance affect workers in local contexts. Further, rethinking a deficit orientation toward lactation that figures it as requiring temporary accommodation would pave the way for changes in spaces that can benefit all. At the local level where policies are implemented, in addition to seeking employee input, TCs can consider how to make lactation spaces permanent, visible fixtures; how work coverage can be at-the-ready; and/or how requirements can be implemented to ensure supervisors and others are educated on lactation support to begin to change local conditions and even set an example for the state and federal levels. To garner support from stakeholders, TCs can draw on apparent feminism by citing worker shortages and encouraging employees to share experiences to demonstrate the consequences of

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relying on existing policy and guidance alone, which leaves critical fields like teaching and nursing especially vulnerable without intervention.

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User Narratives of Transnational Multilingual Small Business Entrepreneurs in Disaster Relief Programs

By Soyeon Lee

ABSTRACT

Purpose: This article argues that transnational multilingual entrepreneurs, particularly immigrant Asian/American small business owners, negotiate their access to disaster recovery-related resources by tactically sharing their own user cases through translocal business networks and developing local ethnocultural collaborative entrepreneurships.

Method: This study was based on a 9-month user experience study across 14 entrepreneurial sites in two cities located in U.S.-Mexico border regions.

Results: User narratives from this study demonstrate that transnational multilingual small business workers tactically adopted nuanced collaboration tactics in navigating resource-constrained environments in post-pandemic workplace settings.

Conclusion: The study findings suggest that the binary notion of use and non-use of multilingual resources and the arrangement of multilingual content in federal disaster relief programs should be reconsidered to better situate human-centered design for transnational multilingual users in workplaces in under-resourced disaster-specific bureaucratic writing contexts.

Keywords: Transnational Multilingual Entrepreneurs, Bureaucratic Writing, UX Research

Practitioner's Takeaway:

- Recognize immigrant multilingual small business entrepreneurs as technical communicators.
- Prioritize the needs of underrepresented multilingual users and honor their lived experiences and community-based localization practices in multilingual workplace contexts.
- Build a nuanced knowledge about complex contexts, in which local communities of underrepresented transnational multilingual entrepreneurs are situated and their linguistically, culturally, and racially diverse experiences and embodied interactions with government agencies are embedded, in the process of developing and localizing technologies and services.

Transnational Multilingual Small Business Entrepreneurs

INTRODUCTION

The recent pandemic severely affected ethnic and racial minority small business owners, drawing attention from scholars, practitioners, and policy makers. Minority entrepreneurs were disproportionately disadvantaged in accessing pandemic relief resources and aid, such as the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and COVID-19 Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL): "The PPP initially relied on traditional banks to deliver loans, which favored existing customers at large banks and disfavored microbusinesses (businesses with fewer than 10 employees), non-employer businesses, and Black- and Latino- or Hispanic-owned businesses (which all tend to be unbanked or underbanked)" (Liu & Parilla, 2020). Although this discussion rightly points out the social inequality in business sectors during the pandemic, it often lacks fuller attention to transnational multilingual Asian/American business owners. According to *Bloomberg*, "60% of Asian-owned businesses nationwide missed out on financial aid," and "immigrant-owned small businesses, often rely[ing] on cash and paper-based bookkeeping" had difficulties in generating the "extensive documentation required for government aid applications" (Yee et al., 2021).

While their economic and social distress associated with changing technological environments and monolingual documentation systems in workplace settings has been severe, immigrant multilingual Asian/American business owners and their lived experiences have yet to be fully investigated. To address this issue, this article presents empirical findings from case studies of Korean-speaking immigrant entrepreneurs and their user experiences in navigating three disaster assistance programs: the COVID-19 Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL), the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), and the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program, commonly offered by government agencies under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020.

Small business owners predominantly work in less bounded places, in which "traditional and stable ideas of public space, namely the forum, the legislature, the visible and well-bounded public" (Grabill, 2010, p. 199) are not clearly visible. And in small business sectors, organizational hierarchies are often unable to be clearly defined. Entrepreneurs and their rhetorical situations in extra-institutional contexts, such as self-employed workers or small business owners, have yet to have full attention from technical and professional communication (TPC) scholars. Citing Petersen's (2014) study, for example, Walton (2016) pointed out that "elite notions of professionalism" that focus on the context of Global North, which encompasses so-called Western developed countries, often "exclude the experiences of marginalized groups" (p. 177). Similarly, Rajan (2021a) challenged dominant narratives that focus on individual professionals in the Global North by tracing grassroots entrepreneurs in India and their rhetorical practices.

Extending this important justice research, this article presents the results from an explorative and narrative-based study of how transnational multilingual Asian/American professionals who were self-employed or ran small businesses and who often served inner-city residents and urban areas interacted with technologies administered by government agencies. User narratives from this study demonstrate that transnational multilingual small business workers tactically adopted nuanced collaboration tactics in navigating resource-constrained environments in post-pandemic workplace settings. Based on a 9-month user case study across 14 entrepreneurial sites, including convenience stores, beauty-supply businesses, and clothing stores, serving mainly other BIPOC communities or lower-income neighborhoods across two cities located in U.S.-Mexico border regions, this article argues that transnational multilingual entrepreneurs negotiate access to disaster recovery-related resources by sharing their own user cases through translocal business networks and developing local collaboration tactics, which I call *ethnocultural collaborative entrepreneurships*. The findings of this study suggest that the binary notion of use and non-use and the arrangement of multilingual content in federal disaster relief programs should be reconsidered to better situate human-centered design for transnational and multilingual workplace users in under-resourced disaster-specific bureaucratic writing contexts.

Research Context

It is known that immigrants tend to be more self-employed than U.S.-born workers (Kochhar, 2015, p. 9; Min, 1990, p. 436). Businesses conducted by Korean immigrants in U.S.-Mexico border regions have shaped professional social webs with international customers

who cross borders. Korean immigrant business owners often called businesses in U.S.-Mexico border regions *Gukgyeong Jangsa* (Korean for "border businesses"), which means trades located geographically and/or socioculturally close to borders. Often, my participants referred to their pre-2000s period as a highly prosperous time when many immigrants achieved rapid economic growth and were even considered a threat to other local business professionals in the region. For example, a Korean immigrant shop owner participant said, "Some wholesalers in [another city's name] jokingly asked us, 'Are you dumping items in the river?' At that time, we had more than 15 stores in just one downtown area." Particularly, in southern border regions, Korean immigrant entrepreneurs operated businesses in textile, clothing, and variety shops, although their populations in these regions made up a smaller proportion than they did in other states such as New York, where Asian/American communities made up a relatively significant proportion.

This trend was impacted by the rapidly growing Mexico-China economic trade and relationship starting in the 2000s. According to several participants in this study, as products from China, such as textiles and shoes, started to be directly imported into Mexico, the number of customers and wholesalers from Northern Mexico was dramatically reduced. Particularly, urbanization development plans accelerated this downturn, because many sources of capital and financial support favored bigger companies such as brand name stores, outlets, shopping malls, hotels, and tourism capitals. Furthermore, Korean immigrant entrepreneurs explained that their businesses anticipated an irreversible downturn due to the new trends in the aftermath of the pandemic. Many participants in my study reported they were under inevitable capitalist (de)global and protectionist forces in the aftermath of COVID impacts, what Nail (2022) termed "COVID capitalism," that is, "the mutual alteration and amplification of COVID *and* capitalism" (p. 338, emphasis in original). They also indicated nuanced aspects in COVID-amplified inequalities, in which minority-owned businesses were falling behind the rapidly changing business trends:

> There are only a few business owners who can maintain service. Only a few people are owners of grocery stores or restaurants, but their location

and mode of operation are important. They should be businesses that operate to-go or drive-through services because restaurants with other types of services were blocked by the city.

As "only a few" businesses were favored in the context of the pandemic, the complexity of government regulations and technological changes such as online takeout delivery services were often described as inevitable and irreversible hurdles.

Some participants explained that a smaller business was likely to receive less assistance: "[During the pandemic] I shut down my store for more than a month, but we have just two employees, including my wife. Other businesses that have many employees, they got more assistance." Other participants also described capitalist forces that were reinforced by the COVID-19 disaster by explaining how they struggled to catch up with the changing landscape in online commerce. One participant shared that he created an online account and listed his store with the Postmates service, a startup online platform, which delivered online orders to customers from small businesses, but soon it merged with Uber:

> Uber only included the biggest stores, like big liquor stores, and then cut off other smaller stores…At the beginning [of the pandemic], I received some online requests for deliveries, but after some weeks, I did not have any orders…If I'd like to follow up with it, I need to spend a great deal of money, and that's a problem. Many business people like me can't do it [competing against Uber-favored stores].

For small business owners like this participant, the Small Business Administration (SBA), a federal government agency, implemented the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) through banks as forgivable loans to be used mainly for payrolls and other expenses including rent, utilities, and mortgage interest costs to sustain their businesses (BEA, 2021). Despite the intention, the programs were criticized due to their disparate access, given that the nature of the distribution relied on banks as intermediaries, which were likely to benefit big companies. Based on participant's narratives and experiences, this article mainly focuses on the PPP, the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL), and the

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Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) programs. While the SBA website offers program information and instructions for application forms in 17 languages, it requires applicants to submit applications in English only and does not provide concrete guidelines (SBA, "COVID-19 Relief Options," n.d.). Against this backdrop, this article is grounded in the following research questions:

- How did transnational multilinguals in different sectors communicate with COVID-19 related programs provided by government agencies and community organizations?
- What experiences and needs did they have for documentation and as users of public services in COVID-19 recovery?
- What challenges did they face in interactions with technical documentation and/or how did they achieve their communication goals through technical documentation?

Literature Review

To study the interactions of transnational multilingual small business owners with technical services and documentation in disaster recovery, I adopted interdisciplinary frameworks at the intersections of user experience (UX), social justice research and design, and intercultural entrepreneurship scholarship in technical and professional communication (TPC). These interdisciplinary frameworks resist inherent deficit-based approaches to multilingual users and implement social justice research and design in usability studies (Acharya, 2022).

Promoting justice-oriented and participatory UX studies, Rose (2016) called for attention to "resource-constrained contexts" that include "both developing countries and vulnerable or underserved populations in developed countries" where populations are situated "with limited access to, or reduced availability of, resources" (Rose, 2016, p. 433). Rose et al. (2017) examined UX design practices of insurance healthcare guidelines that better serve the local needs of Cantonese and Vietnamese immigrant users in nonprofit settings. Social justice-oriented UX research considers "marginalized, vulnerable, and potentially ignored groups" to examine the complexity of the notion of users (Rose, 2016, p. 429). Echoing this justice-oriented UX design approach, Cardinal et al. (2020) further critically examined "damage-based" exploitation

in research and design processes embedded in the "extraction model of UX" and proposed a "multilingual UX design" as a participatory approach to UX design for/with marginalized communities by foregrounding community-based language and translation practices. Lancaster and King (2022) also asked "*how* and *why* and *for* whom we localize" (p. 1, emphasis in original) and investigated how design can include diverse user groups in global contexts.

This study adopts these recent methodological approaches in UX research and advocates for intercultural communication in workplace contexts (Evia & Patriarca, 2012; Fraiberg, 2021; Pihlaja, 2020; Rajan, 2021a, 2021b; Thatcher, 2006). Honoring diverse rhetorical traditions in U.S.-Mexico border regions, Thatcher pointed out, "In the United States, writing reflected and reinforced traditions of individuality, universalism, equality, and common law reasoning" while "the Mexican rhetorical traditions reflected and reinforced an in- and out-group orientation that is common in collective cultures, hierarchical social organizations, and particular or relational thinking patterns" (Thatcher, 2006, p. 388). This article foregrounds Korean immigrant small business entrepreneurs as linguistically, culturally, and racially marginalized users because they have addressed unique rhetorical exigencies under extremely constrained timeframes and under-resourced conditions to sustain their businesses and manage textual engagements in the aftermath of the pandemic. Nonelite technical and communicative expertise and the work of the "grassroots entrepreneurs" (Rajan, 2021b, p. 315) need to be highlighted through more grounded approaches to the notion of entrepreneurship, which is operated "not only by a desire to create economic or social value (Sarkar, 2018) but also by a combination of necessity, interest, and the desire to help members of different occupational communities" (Rajan, 2021a, p. 273).

This study expands social justice research in technical writing (Walton et al., 2019) and usability and UX scholarship (Acharya, 2022) by investigating the localization practices of understudied marginalized users (Agboka, 2013; Dorpenyo, 2020; Sun, 2006; Sun & Getto, 2017; Rose et al., 2017; Rose et al., 2018). The technical and communicative practices of language minority migrant entrepreneurs and their textual labor in interacting with government bureaucracies have yet to be fully studied.

Method

This study (IRB No. 1838733) was conducted between November 2021 and July 2022. At the time of the study, the three programs (EIDL, PPP, and PUD) were closed, and my participants were receiving emails and letters from agencies requesting repayment of the loans or provide evidence for forgivable loans. By using community-based action research methods, I investigated the user experience (UX) of transnational multilingual small business owners in response to disaster-related government recovery programs. To highlight the lived experiences of minority entrepreneurs, this article uses UX research methods in workplace settings by networking narrative-based approaches in human-centered design (N. N. Jones, 2016) and the rhetoric of entrepreneurship (Spinuzzi, 2017). Building on the definition of entrepreneurship offered by Spinuzzi (2017), I conceptualize the notion of translocal and ethnocultural collaborative entrepreneurships, in which rhetorical agency and coalitions are enacted as central pathways to advocating for themselves as agentive technical communicators in the rhetorical process of problem-solving.

Data collection and analysis

I conducted interviews through narrative-based approaches (N. N. Jones, 2016), observations, and artifact collections to understand participants' user experiences. At the time of the study, the federal relief programs had closed the application periods, and thus I mainly relied on participants' voluntary recollective narratives. Narratives are powerful in their capacity "to disrupt and resist because they can create an individual's reality while informing how that individual makes meaning of that constructed reality" and help participants "articulate their values and beliefs" (N. N. Jones, 2017, p. 328). In the field of UX, narratives, storytelling, and *testimonios* increasingly adopt justice-oriented methods that can empower marginalized user groups (Rivera, 2022). I first asked potential interviewees to answer a brief questionnaire that asked about their years of residence in the United States, language repertoires, technological communicative tools, and media channels through which they accessed information about COVID-19 relief aid. At the time of the interviews, participants pointed out that their accounts were already closed and that they were unable to share the interfaces of their accounts on the SBA portals. One of the challenges in studying disaster recovery technologies is that they are not easy to track down. Mostly, those accounts are closed after the relief period ends, and participants' artifacts are often hard to collect due to their nature (e.g., participants' financial information and affective refusal to revisit the complexity of the materials). Three participants shared copies of their application forms after deleting their information in PDF and professional emails between the SBA and themselves. I invited them to a follow-up individual interview or a group interview in a workshop format to generate ideas for actionable solutions, but one participant responded. I expanded the participant pool by snowball sampling across two cities. Interviews were mostly about 45–90 minutes. Participants preferred doing an interview in their workplaces, in a space behind their cash registers or in a small office room. I observed their daily professional activities after the interview ended and when they allowed me to stay and observe them as a researcher. For data analysis, I adopted the recently emerging "mobility system"-based approaches that investigate the transnational literacies of entrepreneurs and their complex networks and mobility in geological spaces (Fraiberg, 2021). By using constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006), I generated 183 code entries and 19 code clusters and synthesized them into two themes: collaboration and non-use of institutional multilingual content.

I revealed my background to the participants during the study. I grew up as the daughter of parents who operated a small clothing store in South Korea and, at the time of the study, had lived in the United States for about 9 years across "transnational social fields" (Levitt & Schiller, 2004, p. 1003). Given this shared position, I had an advantage, as I was able to understand cultural cues and material conditions under which immigrant entrepreneurs were situated (e.g., vulnerable to political and immigrant policy changes, public health crises such as COVID-19, and intensive working conditions, as described in one participant's narrative, "We work for 364 days, being off for only one day, Christmas Day"). But I also acknowledge that my position cannot help me fully understand their perspectives because I am working in a different job sector and under different legal statuses in the United States than they are.

I recruited 20 participants across two cities and, out of the 20 participants, 16 reported that they

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were self-employed or were small business owners. Participants' ages varied: one participant was in the age range of 35–44 while five participants were in the range of 45–54, five participants were in the range of 55–64, and six participants were in the range of 65–74. Out of 20 participants, 16 people were small businesses owners and had often worked (previously or at the time of the study) as local nonprofit community workers while four participants were community workers without having business ownership. Out of 16 business owner participants, one participant identified as female while 15 participants identified as male. Out of 16 small business owners, 14 reported that they applied for at least one of the federal aid programs. Out of 16 participants, other than English, 12 people reported they speak mainly Korean, three participants speak Korean and Spanish, and one participant speaks Korean and Chinese, both as primary languages. While most participants had lived in the United States more than 15 years, the years of residency varied: 15–29 years (n=8) and 30–44 years (n=8). Their businesses ranged from small retail stores (n=8, clothing, convenience, beauty supplies, and other types of stores) to service providers (n=6, restaurant, custodial, and other services).

FINDINGS

The results of the questionnaires (n=14) show how the participants accessed information about COVID-19 recovery-relevant public programs for small businesses. In multiple choice questions about source types, the participants mostly selected the categories of "other" (n=13), "social media" (n=10), and "websites" (n=8) rather than traditional news sources such as TV, radio, or newspapers (Figure 1). Those who selected "other" as main sources shared that many of them used YouTube (n=4) (Figure 2). These questionnaire-based results helped me understand their interviews and synthesize the narratives and emerging themes with their media environment contexts. Overall, changes in technology played a significant role in their daily entrepreneurial activities. The interviews showed that social media platforms such as KakaoTalk—an instant messaging app widely used in Korean communities—were used to gain knowledge about what public programs were available, when they started, and how other business owners worked on their application forms.

Axial coding of the interviews produced two sub-themes around collaboration, which emerged against "documentary governance" (Smith & Schryer, 2008, p.140) and the "textual authority" (Devitt, 1991, p. 347) in bureaucracy and workplace contexts.
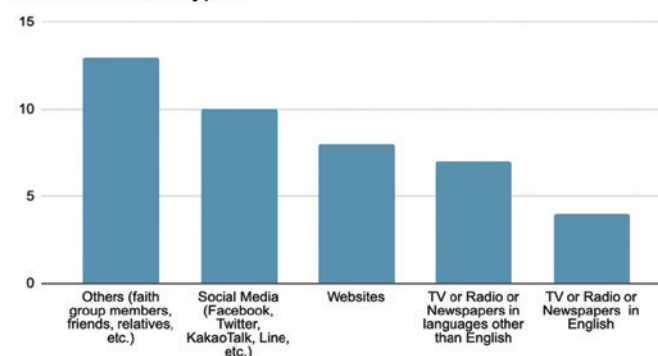

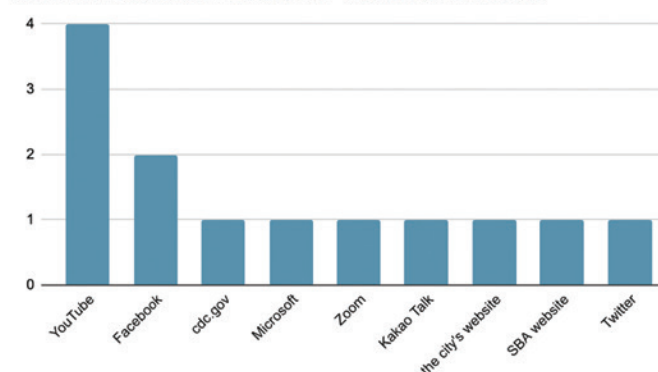**Figure 1: Selected source types for accessing COVID-19 public recovery programs**

Figure 2: Identified sources

Overall, participants' interviews indicated how the participants managed the application process through collaboration. Instead of talking about challenges or pain points throughout the recovery process such as "language barriers" and lack of "access," participants detailed how they communicated with their friends and co-workers through their personal networks on YouTube and KakaoTalk to learn about the programs and complete the application form submissions.

Examining different narratives revealed that, unlike the government websites' assumption that the application writing process occurs between one individual applicant and the form, the participants' activities were collaborative processes. Many

participants were unclear about what the programs were and what details were involved due to the distributed nature of the process they adopted. They said that they could not remember many parts of the process. Their accounts were already closed, and they did not want to look back at them in detail, as memories about them were entangled with emotion and embodied labor. In many cases, they were required to bring supplementary documents that proved the number of their employees, their status, and tax reports, which entailed multiple steps. This volatility of the textual materials in their narratives was common across participants.

In the following sections, I will describe collaborative rhetorical tactics my applicant participants (n=14) adopted during the process with public recovery systems and programs. In interactions with these public recovery systems, participants leveraged a wide range of what Kimball (2017) called "radical sharing" (p. 4). To de Certeau's two tactics, *la perruque* and *bricolage,* Kimball (2017) added "radical sharing" as a third tactic that can be described as a "newfound individual capability of sharing our tactics with people the world over at great speed and with great effect" (p. 4), based on the Internet infrastructure. This sharing practice contrasts with a typical understanding of users of application forms, that is, users who are "conceived of as isolated autonomous consumers, or as self-conscious groups" (p. 2). Helped by S. L. Jones's (2005) continuum, emerging themes will be presented in three sections: less overt collaborative interactions (translocal or contextual collaboration), more overt collaborative interactions (ethnocultural collaboration), and non-use of institutional multilingual content. The first two types of collaborative interactions exemplify the notion of Kimball's (2017) radical sharing, in which migrant entrepreneurs gained agency in "making things happen" (p. 4), and further extend the radicalness in their sharing by critically intervening in unequally networked systems through collaboration based on linguistic, cultural, racial, and ethnic identities.

Managing Less Overt Collaborative Interactions and Translocal Literacy Networks

Extending the notion of collaboration, described as "interaction by an author or authors with people, documents, and organizational rules in the process of creating, creating documents" (S. L. Jones, 2005, p. 450), I use the term *collaboration* to describe those organizational writing activities that entail interactions with other people and technologies including documents, web-based documents, and administrative rules in multilingual and multimodal contexts. Proposing a taxonomy, S. L. Jones (2005) coined the term *less overt collaboration* and described this collaboration as *contextual collaboration*, given its complex interaction that "involves the context of the organization itself" (p. 450). Contextual collaboration was originally proposed by Winsor (1989) to describe the context in which "any individual's writing is called forth and shaped by the needs and aims of the organization, and that to be understood it must draw on vocabulary, knowledge, and beliefs other organization members share" (p. 271).

Overall, interviews suggested that participants were adaptive to changing policies and programs by completing contextual interactions through digital tools such as mobile applications and web-based materials. Participants often assembled digital technologies and user-generated instructions through YouTube. I would call this group of participants (n=9) those who self-regulated the application processes through less overt collaboration that is centered on translocal online literacy networks.

Often, this group of participants said they needed to contact their CPAs, remotely located yet Korean-speaking CPAs in other states, or friends to seek information about the public programs or do what S. L. Jones termed "document borrowing" (p. 452), that is, "collaborating by borrowing from other documents, generally ones existing prior to the current writing task" (p. 452). The participants said that they leveraged genre knowledge, such as accounting terminology and financial literacy obtained from other applicants' cases via YouTube and comments under the videos or other social media platforms, which is similar to "contextual collaboration" (S. L. Jones, 2005; Winsor, 1989). This group of participants often said that the application form itself was not hard and the questions in the form were generally in plain language. However, they also reported that the words were ambiguous in certain areas.

To address this ambiguity, this group of participants reported that they believed that computer skills augmented English skills in the application process. For example, one participant explained that managing applications via the Internet is more important than reading, speaking, and writing in English: "I don't

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speak English well. But I can do the Internet well …. Everything needs to be done through computers." This interview excerpt means that for participants, computer skills can be more productive in the application process although they feel somewhat less confident working with English only monolingual materials. The most important resources are not English skills but the ability to understand materials through digital tools that can help them network with or consult materials or instructions from other small business owner applicants, often remotely located, and work with them on the application.

Another participant reported that he used YouTube materials and media channels in Korean:

> In the beginning, it was very hard to understand the process of the program. So, I followed multiple YouTube channels about the PPP application and watched relevant YouTube videos all the time to catch up on the updated information about PPP. The polices and guidelines from the SBA were changing too frequently, and I relied a lot on YouTube videos and comments below those videos.

This participant's response also offers an example of "less overt collaboration," as he relied on previous application cases and experiences to gain knowledge about its genre-based terms (e.g., accounting terminology) from other distant applicants. Another participant talked about how he used YouTube to learn from other small business owner applicants and CPAs who updated shifting policies.

> I did the form on my own. You know, English is not my language, but if you go to YouTube, there are lots of applicants …. The problem is that those languages are ambiguous even in forms in Korean. Then, you can imagine how ambiguous those forms in English would be. But by using Korean applicants' cases, other applicant's cases, and multiple YouTube channels by CPAs, I compared them to each other.

Other participants reported that they networked with other transnational entrepreneurs through social medial platforms such as KakaoTalk for information in other states, where information in Korean was more abundant and quickly circulated. For example, a participant who started a business five years ago

after moving from another state explained that he actively used information from friends through translocal networks, where many Korean immigrant populations exchanged information about disaster recovery programs for small business owners. Other participants' narratives also display that they often less overtly collaborated with Korean online communities or Korean-speaking CPAs, located in other states.

These user narratives, which highlighted YouTube as a place for translocal online communities in which they examined other user cases, show how radical sharing occurred in the disaster recovery process in using translocal networks that often compensated for their self-reported lack of English skills, the ambivalent meaning of the form, and changing bureaucratic policies that govern the programs in disaster recovery-specific situations.

Coordinating More Overt Collaborative Interactions through Local Ethnocultural Networks

While some participants operated the application processes in a self-regulated way through less overt collaboration, other participants used more overt collaborative interactions and local ethnocultural networks. Specifically, those who showed more overt collaborative interactions showed what S. L. Jones (2005) referred to as "hierarchical collaboration" (p. 459). This group of participants (n=5) displayed a kind of mentoring interaction, in which one experienced applicant offered advice or mentorship in person to other applicants. Some participants who ran small retail stores mentored by generally using digital tools and web-based media literacies such as translation apps and local news media. Other participants leveraged this mentorship and human relations to navigate the application process in resource-constrained contexts. For example, one participant volunteered to help other Korean immigrant small business owner applicants apply for the programs while inviting them to his store.

This participant further explained that he read two local newspapers and two Mexican newspapers to publish bi-monthly local Korean newspapers, which is unpaid volunteer work he started five years before the time of the interview. While using multiple digital translation apps, including Google Translate and Google Lens, he compared what he translated in Korean with other media including YouTube channels. As a local newspaper editor, he particularly emphasized

the point that he wanted to meet the needs of Korean immigrant small business owners including himself, who lacked locale-specific news about relief programs which was covered neither by local news nor by national English newspapers: "I read four newspapers: [city name] Times and presses from Mexico. Although I don't speak Spanish, I can translate them. Google Translate translates all languages into Korean. I am responsible for delivering correct information."

The same manner was applied in his approach to translation. The participant said that he used multiple translation apps. He showed how he daily used Google Translate and Google Lens to crosscheck if the meanings of the words and website information he intended to deliver were correct. By gathering information from diverse news media and websites and translating information into Korean, he helped more than 20 local business owners near his own store access information about the public relief programs.

The user narratives of those who got help from this participant exemplify how a more overt collaborative action occurred. Commonly, they assigned power and agency to other experts or applicants and actively collaborated with each other to complete the applications through in-person communication and verbal group communications. One participant, who runs a restaurant said, "I don't know what I don't know. I don't know what PPP is, what SBA is, I just know that government helps us with aid, then, I would say, then, okay. But I don't know what SBA is, I don't know what exactly SBA is. But I think I should get help. I reported my incomes and paid taxes for 20 something years." Often, participants said they don't know what they don't know and do not access information through TV, radio, or newspapers as they don't have time to view them. This participant also said, "Do you think I have time to watch TV? I don't have time for that. Anyway, I can't watch TV as I don't know English." Participants often shared how they stopped learning English after they attempted to meet their own desire to learn English: "When I started my business, I didn't know English or Spanish. I went to community college to learn English, I went up to the level 7 out of 10, but I needed to run my business and study English at the same time; it [doing both] was too hard once the level went beyond 7." Negotiating their literacy, access to information, and rhetorical agency, these participants leveraged personal networks, human relations, social

media, and resource coordination to learn about the presence of recovery programs and apply for them.

When asked what if there were no expert or more experienced applicants around them, one participant said: "Why are you asking that? [laughing] There ARE resources. In that case, I will find another person." Then, he continued:

> Maybe, it would be very hard. But why are you saying there would be no one, although there is actually one. What if there is no one like a *hyeongnim* [Korean for brother], you mean? Then, I will find other young Korean transnational business owners who can speak English, maybe I would ask them to help me with the application process. I would say, literally I can't do it [the application process] on my own.

This participant's interview suggests that participants compensated their lack of resources and self-reported literacy skills with their ethnocultural resources. In this sense, more overt collaboration in post-pandemic contexts among Korean immigrant entrepreneurs is similar to migrant workers from Mexico who learned English in their own way in the basement of a grocery shop in a small town in a Midwestern state, described in Kalmar's (2001) ethnographic work (p. 22) or immigrant Latinx custodial workers whose literate repertoires and knowledge are unfairly undermined in workplaces by "white English supremacy" (Remigio Ortega et al., 2022, p. 36), in that their literacy work and labor across different contexts are commonly entangled around racial discrimination, monolingual paradigms, and xenophobic climates against migrant workers of color and emerged as self-reliant pathways to sustain not only their professional lives but also their own human dignity based on their race and ethnicity, by "inverting the hierarchy" (Kalmar, 2001, p. 21).

Another participant, who ran a small retail store, also reported his overt collaboration with other applicants. However, it should be noted that overt collaboration does not necessarily lead to successful procedures or results. For example, he reported that he ended up returning the benefits he received to the government agency.

> But, on a website, I happened to see a Korean lawyer's comments about other applicants' cases

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that are similar to my temporary worker [visa type] status and applications. The comments said that those cases are not supposed to take the benefits. I was scared, so I returned the benefits I received by returning a check. Some months later, the office called me, and they said I was eligible to receive the benefits. But I just left it as it was [returned] and did not apply for them again.

The uncertainty created lots of tension and distress ("I was scared") and took emotional labor as he needed to negotiate with immigration-relevant policies and communicate with the office to confirm his eligibility.

Overall participants' interviews suggest that creating a rhetorical network or flow is more important than translating words in the form or instructions. This group of participants often shared their challenges stemming from linguistic and cultural differences, and this shared history seemed to enable them to create an ethnocultural community in which members help other members in a timebound and resource-constrained situation, based on their communal embodied experiences while doing business.

Non-Use of Institutional Multilingual Content

Except for one participant, interviewees mostly mentioned that they did not use translated materials in Korean provided by government agencies for the application process. Neither group mentioned a Korean translation, except for one participant, and their user narratives suggested that only one participant used the Korean translations of the forms and instructions.

In my observation of the website, forms in Korean were listed, along with other multiple instruction or information sheet files, without a hierarchical design. Therefore, it was hard to see the presence of the forms in Korean. More importantly, information in plain language that the website promised to comply with in offering public programs in the form or information sheets does not seem to align with language accessibility (SBA, "Plain Language," n.d.). For example, the phrase "a final *balloon* payment" (emphasis in original) observed from my participant's SBA email artifact or "safe harbor" observed from a PPP form in PDF look plain and clear, but these are in fact jargon and financial terminology and need more contextual explanation. In the document translated into Korean, "safe harbor" is translated as *Anjeon Gyuchik*, which can be back translated into "safety

rules." From the left side menu of the SBA website, a section titled "COVID-19 Recovery Information in Other Languages," an obvious typo remained the same throughout my study period: "신청서는 드시 영어로 제출해야 합니다. 아래 문서는 모두 정보 제공 목적으로만 제공됩니다," which can be back-translated to "your application st (the first syllable "mu" missing from the word "must") be submitted in English. The following documents are provided for information purposes only" (SBA, "PPP Loan Forgiveness," n.d.). Also, in the PDF form titled "Economic Injury Disaster Loan Supporting Information" (SBA, "EIDL Supporting Information," n.d.), the multilingual applicant was told in a more threatening tone: "I certify under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States that the foregoing is true and correct" was translated into Korean as "본인은 상기 내용이 사실이며, 위증 시 미국 법률에 따라 처벌받는다는 것을 인증합니다," which can be back-translated into the sentence "I certify that the foregoing is true and correct and that, in case of perjury, I will be punished by the laws of the United States." This observation is similar to the findings of analyses of language in mortgage documents (N. N. Jones & Williams, 2017) and of the instruction documents of the asylum application (Sims, 2022), in which plain language itself does not lead to justice. Human-centered design needs to be implemented to address inequality and injustice embedded in technical documents and the materiality of the text and form.

The participants seemed to be acutely aware of these power structures, embedded in the web-based infrastructures of the programs. Although the SBA website offers "multilingual" information, it does not seem to be scanned, noticed, and used by potential applicants. As N. N. Jones and Williams (2017) noted, delivering complex information requires "recalibrating our understanding of plain language's purpose, with an eye toward design and not just information dissemination" (p. 428). The design of the multilingual section of the SBA websites seemed to work like a "file cabinet" (Redish, 2012, p. 3) rather than a usable interface designed to help applicants find resources and feel empowered to complete the process. This finding can be supported by the fact that although multilingual resources were offered on the website, the participants, particularly the participants who used a more overt collaboration, did not use these resources and thus seemed to be closer to non-users, specifically, the "rejecters" or the "excluded" (Wyatt, 2003, p. 67).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

These user narratives advocate the reconsideration of the multilingual use of public systems and programs. The participants' use and textual labor in application procedures entail collective care, emotion, and affective and embodied practices, which are often entangled with community histories, racial experiences, and entrepreneurial contexts under disaster-specific capitalism and global forces. Commonly, they rejected or were excluded from multilingual resources and alternatively arranged translocal and ethnocultural collaborative entrepreneurships. Their "radical sharing" (Kimball, 2017, p. 4) based on digital infrastructures and ethnocultural networks seemed to be enacted by grassroots community empowerment and implemented due to their own hesitance about using institutional multilingual resources or resistance against implicit logics embedded in them, often based on deficit-based approaches to minority users, even though those resources seemingly looked inclusive.

This research has demonstrated that transnational multilingual small business owners leveraged radical sharing at two levels in a resource-constrained: less overt collaborative interactions and more overt ethnocultural collaborative interactions. Furthermore, the context of how multilingual resources were offered also seemed to be important. Multilingual resources were not established from the beginning and were not provided consistently across different types of documents (e.g., information sheets, forms, and instructions for each program), and thus the participants were often unaware of the presence of multilingual resources. This irregular and inconsistent content arrangement led to the failure to build trust between government agencies and minority small business owner applicants who were already constrained by time and resources. This study shows that transnational multilingual users mostly navigated the application process of public programs without official translations. In workplace writing studies and human-centered design scholarship, this study is consistent with the findings from other multilingual UX studies and social justice research and design work in technical writing (Cardinal et al., 2020; Rose et al., 2017). Beyond the correctness of translation, even beyond plain language discourses in bureaucratic writing, it is more important to design when, how, and where multilingual content is situated and localized in consideration of specific community-based contexts.

> [T]he design, development, and dissemination of multilingual content relies not only on successful translation of written information, but also on ethical collaborations between communication designers and the multilingual communities we increasingly seek to support. Multilingual communication design is a rhetorically situated practice that should be informed by the expertise of multilingual users (Cardinal et al., 2020, p. 2).

In sum, transnational multilingual users' narratives help us complicate the binary of use and non-use of institutional multilingual resources and understand minority small business owners' non-use or rejection of multilingual resources and their ethnocultural radical sharing, which is similar to work of "information coordinators" (S. L. Jones, 2005, p. 464). Their narratives suggest that in a more necessity-driven context (Rajan, 2021a, 2021b), the binary of user and non-user needs to be reconceptualized because those views tend to flatten differences between users or non-users and multilayered and embodied contexts. Small business owners mostly had to adapt their tasks to the roles of technical writers, accountants, and collaborators in response to the digital environment for application processes (e.g., email accounts, government portals, and digital forms) and resource-constrained contexts.

Given the specificity of the pandemic, disaster recovery programs for small businesses, relevant policies, and criteria were newly implemented and constantly changing. Institutional multilingual arrangements reinforced monolingual paradigms, in which those resources were translated without considering multilingual users' contexts and embodied labor under material conditions and resource-constrained contexts. Transnational multilingual entrepreneurs enacted their agency drawing from collective knowledge gained from translocal ethnic communities and technological resources. Their narratives highlight the need for future research to further involve their practices and perspectives at an early design stage and the need to consider a more nuanced way to promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice in technical communication between government agencies and minority entrepreneurs.

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Are You Committed to Diversity?: Evaluating Immigrants' Perceptions of U.S. Banks' Diversity and Inclusion Claims/Initiatives

By Isidore Dorpenyo, Meghalee Das, Chris Dayley, Aimee Kendall Roundtree, and Miriam F. Williams

ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study examined immigrants' perceptions of their interactions with financial institutions and asked if U.S. immigrants are considered in these institutions' formal statements on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

Method: We interviewed 13 participants and also conducted a content analysis of the DEI statements of the top nine U.S. banks. In addition to content analysis, we also used text mining to gain further information on the key themes prevalent in the diversity statements of the financial institutions.

Results: Our findings show a clear disconnect between the top U.S. banks' DEI statements and the lived experiences of immigrants. For instance, banks had oppressive banking processes that made it difficult for immigrants to open accounts. We also identified lack of communication channels.

Conclusion: As calls for diversity, equity, and inclusion in our field grow, we must pay attention to material conditions of immigrant students/scholars in Technical and Professional Communication (TPC) academic programs. Immigrants interviewed in this study wanted clarity about which documents they need to submit to banks, accurate translation of bank-related documents, and detailed explanations of banking industry jargon.

Keywords: Immigrants; DEI; Banking; Content Analysis; Text Mining

Practitioner's Takeaway:

- This study reveals many of the challenges immigrants encounter with U.S. banking institutions and opportunities for technical communicators to help banks treat immigrants with dignity and respect.
- Technical communicators have the skills and tools to involve immigrants and other stakeholders in efforts to move U.S. banking institutions beyond DEI statements to socially just action.

- The article emphasizes the importance of using inclusive language, especially on websites, which professional and business communicators can review, test with a multicultural customer base, and make modifications with, if necessary. The article also makes practical suggestions which practitioners can benefit from, such as offering alternative forms of identification that can be accepted for non-residents to open bank accounts.

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INTRODUCTION

In the wake of the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, and subsequent nationwide protests against police violence in the summer of 2020, multinational and national institutions and organizations in the United States created, revised, and updated diversity, equity, and inclusion statements to make public their support for anti-racist and social justice movements. On social media and in academic circles, some readers of these statements critiqued these moves as performative and encouraged organizations to implement actionable anti-racist policies and procedures against white supremacy within their organizations and beyond. During this same summer, the Trump administration proposed an international student policy that would have an immediate impact on immigrant students who were taking online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, if visa-holding college students were only enrolled in online classes, which were the norm during the COVID-19 pandemic, these students would have to leave the country. Though the policy was ultimately rescinded, other anti-immigrant U.S. policies and practices persist. Thus, debates about anti-immigrant policies in the United States in the midst of the creation, revision, and updating of diversity and inclusion statements raise questions about who is included and/or excluded from institutions when they discuss diversity, equity, and inclusion.

While technical communication scholars have accurately defined social justice in technical communication (Agboka, 2014) and identified frameworks to study technical communication (Walton et al., 2019), few studies have demonstrated how forms of oppression and exclusion in technical communication are exacerbated by one's status as a person of color who is also an immigrant (Phillips & Deleon, 2022; Walwema & Chamichael, 2021). We need only recount the historical and recent xenophobic and nationalist laws in Europe and the United States to understand the depth and reach of white supremacist policies and practices.

In the U.S., immigrants have more complex interactions with banking institutions than U.S. citizens. Also, access to banking services is an important factor in being able to live, work, and pursue a degree in the United States. For these reasons, we selected financial services institutions in the United States as a site to explore the unique experiences of immigrants of color. Specifically, we are concerned about immigrants' perceptions of their interactions with financial institutions and if immigrants are considered in these institutions' formal statements on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The Brookings Institution and the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago reported on the importance of recognizing the challenges immigrants face when attempting to establish financial security and stability in the United States (Paulson et al., 2006). Paulson et. al (2006) focused on safety issues faced by undocumented immigrants who are "unbanked" because they use alternative banking services due to lack of identification or lack of trust in banking. Paulson et. al. (2006) explain how some Texas law enforcement agencies and the Mexican Consulate worked together to encourage all banks in Austin, Texas, to accept Matricula Consular cards, a Mexican Consulate-issued identification card, for immigrants from Mexico (p. 66). Although these types of local efforts are important, they do not address obstacles faced by immigrants who do attempt to obtain financial services but are denied equal access to services due to discriminatory policies and practices (tacit or explicit) beyond identification cards. In this study, we explore ways that banks in the United States might make explicit efforts to include immigrants in discussions of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

This study is unapologetically concerned with the lived experiences of immigrants of color, who face discrimination due to their national origin and must also deal with white supremacy. While some immigrants from majority countries may identify as white and not as people of color, this study refers to those immigrants who do identify as people of color and are also perceived as such in the United States. Immigrants are not a homogenous group and have complex identities, with differences in race, ethnicity, cultural norms, and languages spoken. But many immigrants of color are from majority countries, and no matter how they perceive themselves, they can be subjected to racial or linguistic bias. In the United States, immigrants and multilinguals must negotiate their lived experiences. Technical and professional communication (TPC) scholars have examined these experiences, which include negotiation of communication practices (Gonzales, 2018), work authorization (Walwema & Chamichael, 2021), health insurance (Rose et al., 2017) and asylum status (Sims, 2022). There is little research about how

immigrants negotiate their lived experience with the financial institutions in the United States.

STUDIES ON BANKING STATEMENTS AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

While much research has been conducted regarding financial services industry documents, few studies examine DEI statements in banking. For the purpose of this study, diversity and inclusion activities and statements can be likened to general corporate social responsibility statements (CSRs). Although these statements traditionally discuss a different subject matter—namely, the institution's stance on global warming, climate change, and environmental sustainability—they share with diversity and inclusion activities an underlying goal of demonstrating the financial institution's ethical, social, and cultural positioning. A case study of corporate social responsibility statements found that employees use formal reporting, informal internal communication, and organizational culture to understand CSRs (Miller 2018). They perceive CSRs as obligatory and superficial to demonstrate corporate philanthropy. Another study used corpus linguistic tools to analyze climate change in corporate social responsibility and environmental reports of major oil companies from 2000 to 2013 (Jaworska 2018). The sample included 119 stand-alone reports, 175 relevant chapters, and 14,806,512 words. The study found a shift from portraying climate change as addressable (before the mid-2000s) to portraying climate change as an unpredictable future force, thereby downplaying the financial sector's own complicity in environmental degradation. Another study analyzed the DEI initiatives of banks, including their statements and actions, after the murder of George Floyd, and the impact it had on how corporations talk about and act on DEI priorities (Hoffman, 2021). The article interviewed bank executives and used key quotes from the DEI statements and said that the resultant response was "more of an empathy shock for many bankers, who might not have realized how deep racial disparities are" (p. 29). But they acknowledged that they had a long way to go to achieve economic and social justice and wanted customers to know that their DEI statements and actions were not just a trendy development (Hoffman, 2021). Our study extends this work by examining the diversity activities from the perspective

of the target customer and constituent. We chose to analyze DEI statements, as they are the primary documents that reflect an organization's commitment to diversity and outlines their values as well as any actions taken by them. In our content analysis of DEI statements, we will also call attention to whose interests are highlighted or downplayed in financial institution's DEI statements.

Other studies of financial sector communication focus on genres. Annual reports are among the most common genres studied. A regression analysis of 80 stock exchange reports recommending to "buy," "hold," or "sell" shares found that investors' reactions were stronger when the reports used first person pronouns and verbs (Klimczak & Dynel, 2018). Positive and negative markers depended on whether the report recommended to "buy," "hold," or "sell." Mitigation strategies such as hedges were used more for "hold" than "buy" recommendations. Subjectivization such as first person, related to company share prices, was used frequently for "hold" recommendations with prices. Subjectivization was also used frequently for "sell" recommendations, leading to a share price decrease.

A linguistic corpus content analysis of annual reports from a purposive sample of Standard & Poor's 500 corporations identified 35 narrative strategies expressing certainty, optimism, activity, realism, and commonality (Laskin, 2018). Top performing companies stressed their achievements, and low performing companies emphasized assurance and commonalities with top performers. An analysis of four annual reports found they were all multimodal (text and figures) and hedged assumptions (Lejeune, 2018). They offered projections without attribution, rather than direct predictions. Predictions and projections also varied between reports from different countries. What types of predictions, projections, or promises do financial services DEI statements make and do these statements make any references to the concerns of immigrants of color?

Again, though not directly related to DEI, other genres also emerge from the literature. A rhetorical analysis of 13 disclosure policies on investor relations websites of listed companies found that the policies used consistent genre patterns to address requirements of authorities—explaining what the disclosure is about, declaring compliance with regulations, and proclamation of the company principles followed

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(Koskela, 2018). Each disclosure contained company-specific rhetorical moves. To portray a rhetorically convincing image, transparency characterizations need to reflect the company strategy. A discourse analysis of 435 press releases of public authorities in Sweden during a financial crisis between 2008 and 2010 found an array of responses, from simplicity and clarity to complexity and strategic ambiguity (Johansson & Nord, 2018). A textual analysis examined JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America, and Wells Fargo's news releases, annual reports, and a shareholder annual letter and found that they used bolstering and image repair strategies to reaffirm their social responsibility (Hearit, 2018). The messaging also stressed stability, success, and community involvement/giving. They emphasized their handle on the way forward. Still other technical communication research investigates industry codes of ethics that, on their face, attend to social responsibility and corporate-community relations, but that do not outline specific courses of ethical interactions or strategies for maintaining transparency and responsibility to the community (Roundtree, 2022). These studies set the groundwork for explaining the limitations of corporate and industry communication as it pertains to social dimensions. Our project extends this work by examining a particular vulnerable subpopulation with much at stake and at play in their industry and corporate interactions.

Prior studies in technical communication of banking messages show the importance of banking communication and the technical communicator's role in aiding clarity and transparency. A study of 90 corporate social responsibility reports in energy and banking found cross-cultural variations in the rhetorical moves made, but a tendency to use future rather than present tense was used to promote corporate image (Yu & Bondi, 2019). Our project extends this work by providing a reception analysis from the banking consumer's perspective. Another study of Fortune 500 corporate mission statements including banks found that the higher performing the company, the greater attention the language showed to accommodating the public, satisfying employees, and other relationships (Jung & Pomper, 2014). Our study extends this work by examining DEI statements, another emerging and important genre for banks in creating social consciousness, social responsibility, and corporate image.

Why Immigrants of Color?

We see our work as an extension of and a response to the invitation offered by several predecessors in technical communication to examine our points of communication, interaction, and translation using a social justice lens. Two special issues in our field most strongly opened this invitation. First, in a special issue on social justice, guest editors Agboka and Dorpenyo (2022) made a powerful call for TPC scholars to consider injustice everywhere. In response, four authors in this issue focused their studies on the vital concerns of immigrants and international students. Sims (2022) analyzed the U.S. Asylum seeking application document, I-589, using plain language guidelines proposed by Jones and Williams (2017) and identified that the document failed to accommodate the needs of its audiences both on the design and linguistic levels. According to Sims (2022), the document suffers "from imprecise headings followed by unrelated content; poor visual appeal exacerbated by long, complex sentences and ineffective lists; over-utilization of cross-references; and repetitive information" (p. 22). The document's language choice, Sims reveals, is also heavily laden with legal jargon and this reduces or does not properly consider the vulnerable and traumatized experiences of applicants. Sims encourages technical communicators to communicate with vulnerable individuals in a more respectful and dignified way and reminds technical communicators that our primary goal is to value human experience over institutional ideologies. She articulates the need for the field to integrate plain language and human-centered design practices in practice and pedagogy if we want to design socially just documents that "balance the needs of vulnerable audiences with the interests of powerful stakeholders" (p. 11). In the same special issue, Phillips and Deleon (2022) indicate that international students do not find it easy when they come to pursue higher education in the United States. They describe the oppressive structures that first-generation Latinx students, for instance, have to endure when they arrive in the United States to pursue higher education. They also show us how they negotiate their lived experiences by building coalitions and taking actions that are culturally informed and "tactical decision-making" (p. 197) that enabled them to recognize, reveal, reject, and replace (Walton et al., 2019) the oppressive structures that marginalize them.

Second, another special issue by Savage and Agboka (2015) issued another call to social justice in technical communication to which our work responds. Considering that professional and technical communication practitioners work across the globe, it is quite disappointing that most of the conversations about social justice occur in the developed world or the Global North, also known as minority countries, per Pflugfelder et al. (2023), who recast the terms to show the reality of shared struggles and experiences of the majority of the world's population as opposed to the minority of countries and global citizens with the most economic means. In response, Savage and Agboka (2015) edited a special issue that focused on socially unjust practices in the Global South, or what Pflugfelder et al. (2023) call the majority countries. They indicated the special issue sought "to encourage scholarly discussions and publications about the important role of professional and technical communication in the Global South or majority countries; promote communication practices that project and advance issues about populations within the Global South or majority countries, and provide resources (e.g., theories, methods, and cases) for addressing the challenges raised by research in and about the Global South" (p. 10). The contributors to the special issue paid attention to various forms of injustice in the Global South/majority countries and worked toward the important goal of magnifying the agency of vulnerable populations.

Walwema (2021) skillfully described the historical concerns of TPC over the years from our concerns with defining good technical communication, to ethical concerns, to international technical communication, and now to issues of diversity, inclusion, and social justice. Walwema (2021) argues that to effectively examine issues of racism and diversity, we must be willing to identify research trajectories that will help us confront the history of racism in the United States. As this trajectory relates to banking, our field includes studies on the realities of the long history of racist banking practices (Williams, 2006; Jones & Williams, 2017), but we have yet to examine how these practices affect the lived experiences of people who are immigrants, multilinguals, and people of color. Additionally, two authors of this study, Isidore Dorpenyo and Meghalee Das are immigrants of color, who experienced various

problems that limited or hindered their access to banking services. This particularly motivated them to conduct a scholarly investigation into the issue and to create space for other immigrants of color to share their experiences, which may result in recommendations for banks to create more equitable practices and policies. In this study, we extend the field's exploration of this industry by examining 1) immigrants' responses to their interactions with U.S. banks and 2) if banking institution's DEI statements include immigrants.

We understand *immigrant*, *person of color*, and *majority/minority world or country of origin* as different but intersectional vectors. We use the definition of intersectional from Crenshaw, namely exploring the ways that different forms of bias and inequality compound themselves and create new, unique challenges (Crenshaw, 2013). We also understand intersectionality in technical communication through Rodriguez—namely, how race, ethnicity, and other identities interact in the technical communication classroom (Rodriguez, 2021). We extend this work by examining intersectionality as it pertains to banking, another technical communication setting. We understand *immigrant* as non-citizens of the U.S. We understand *persons of color* as those from different racial backgrounds. We understand *minority world* as a more accurate term for what was called *Western*, *Global North*, *first-world*, or *developed countries* with more wealth and economic means than others. *Majority world*, in turn, refers to the *Global South*, *developing countries*, or *third-world countries* in prior literature. These terms interplay and intersect with one another. For example, if immigrants are persons of color and immigrants, they might face similar stigmatization and disparity as might U.S. citizens who are persons of color. If persons of color are citizens of minority countries, then they might not face the strict banking limitations in their country as do immigrants in their country. Immigrants from minority countries might also escape the strict banking limitations in other minority countries, and they might also escape stigma and racism if they are not people of color.

For the purposes of this project, we specifically attend to immigrant populations of color, given the compounding inequities that they face in banking. From an intersectional perspective, countries of origin create economic, material differences in customer

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bases. Then, race compounds it. The opposite applies as well. Race creates difference, and country of origin can compound it. Race and country of origin create an interesting vortex that amplifies the difference created by both. For example, White South Africans would have a very different banking experience in the United States than Black South Africans. And Black South Africans might have a very different banking experience in America than Black Americans or than their second-generation children. In the case of banking in the United States, social stigma pertaining to race might change not only customers' perception of banking transactions, but it might also affect banking employees' perceptions of the transaction. Then, to complicate matters more, customers with accents would be perceived differently as well. The origin of the accent would matter as well, as would current relations between the country of origin and the United States. We agree with Crenshaw that not even banking transactions can escape these dynamics to varying degrees of intensity and implication.

METHODS

In this study, we aim to add to TPC research about the lived experiences of immigrants by exploring the following questions:

R1: What are immigrants of colors' perceptions of their interactions with financial institutions?

R2: In what ways do financial institutions address the unique experiences of immigrants of color in DEI statements?

R3: How do these interactions (i.e., the lived experiences of immigrants of color and official DEI communication from the institutions) expose the various forms of oppression immigrants of color encounter with financial institution?

To answer our first research question, we interviewed 13 participants and conducted a content analysis and text mining of the DEI statements of the top nine U.S. banks, which we selected based on their assets. In the subsequent sections, we describe how we selected the banks and our interview participants. We also describe our analytical method for both the DEI statements and the interviews. We remind our readers that this research was approved by the Institutional Review Boards at George Mason (IRB# 1713853-1) and at Texas State University (IRB# 7635).

Participant Interviews

To investigate our first research question, we interviewed 13 participants: Jennifer, Joanna, Francis, Theophilus, Rosemary, Jasmine, Monica, Roselyn, Maxwell, Emmanuel, Sandra, Teresa, and Sampson (all participants' names are pseudonyms). Each participant identified as an immigrant residing in the United States. To recruit participants for the study, a list was created of potential participants based on the personal connections of the researchers. We reached out to people we knew from our network of colleagues whom we knew to be international immigrants. Since all researchers on this project are in the academy (four professors and one PhD candidate), we contacted colleagues we knew from graduate school and our institutions. We also encouraged our colleagues to share our call for research participants with colleagues or their acquaintances. This snowballing approach proved useful. For instance, Theophilus agreed to be interviewed for this project when he was contacted by one of the researchers. After the interview, he spoke to his wife (Joanna) about the interview, and she also agreed to participate. After the conversation with Joanna, she also said she knew someone (Jasmine) who would be interested in this project and sent the call-to-participate statement to her. Isidore also reached out to Jasmine later and she agreed to participate. Those who agreed to participate in an interview were then assigned to one of the researchers to conduct the interview.

Eight (8) of the thirteen (13) study participants indicated that they were from Ghana. Of those from Ghana, one was from Tamala, one was from Ho, three were from Accra, and two did not indicate a specific city in Ghana they were from. One of the participants from Ghana reported that they obtained their master's degree from Norway. The remaining participants indicated they were from Beijing (China), Delhi (India), Mérida (Mexico), Nepal (no specific city was given), and Yucatan (Mexico). Of the 13 participants, 8 identified as women and 5 as men. All 13 participants had a college degree broken down as follows: 7 had received PhDs; 2 were PhD candidates; 2 were master's degree holders; and 2 were bachelor's degree holders. Each participant was interviewed over Zoom. Interview questions (See Appendix A) came from a list of interview questions developed by the researchers. Each interview lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. Interviews were recorded with permission.

The interview recordings were professionally transcribed, and the resulting documents were used in data analysis. Interview data was analyzed using both prefigured and emergent codes (Crabtree & Miller, 1992, p. 151). Each interview transcript was broken down into prefigured codes based on the interview questions. From there, emergent codes were created based on emerging themes identified in each prefigured section. Two of the researchers developed codes using this method independently and met together to confirm that their coding was accurate.

Content Analysis of Diversity and Inclusion Statements

To examine our second research question, we used content analysis of the DEI statements of the nine financial institutions we selected and confirmed the findings of the content analysis with text mining. For this article, we limited our analysis to nine (9) banks. We based our selections on the "Top 10 biggest banks by assets" listed by Insider Intelligence (2023), a research organization which provides its clients with forecasts, analysis, and benchmarks on how to conduct business in the digital world. The nine banks we selected were Bank of New York Mellon, Truist Bank, JPMorgan Chase Bank, Bank of America, Wells Fargo, PNC Bank, Citi Bank, US Bank, and TD Bank. Capital One bank was not included because, during the data collection period, the researchers were unable to locate their DEI statements online.

After selecting banks to study, we visited each of their websites, and copied and pasted information from the banks' "mission," "diversity statement," "culture," "governance," and "about us'" sections into an Excel spreadsheet. We performed a content analysis of the information we pasted in the Excel spreadsheet. Content analysis is a systematic, inductive, and rigorous process used to analyze documents obtained or generated during research. The researcher uses analytic constructs or "rules of inference to move from the text to the answers to the research question" (White & Marsh, 2006, p. 27). The researcher, thus, reads through the data to determine the big picture that emerges from coding for key phrases and text segments that correspond to the questions, notes, and other subtle information that seems important and/or unexpected. After gathering the data from the banks' websites, we analyzed the data in the spreadsheet to find patterns or codes. Here, we use "codes" to mean "a word

or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative … attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (Saldana, 2009, p. 3). After a thorough discussion about how to analyze the data, Isidore Dorpenyo and Meghalee Das were assigned to do the coding. We made this decision based on the fact that we wanted to limit the number of codes generated and also bring focus and a systematic organization to the analysis. We acknowledged that if all five authors on this project completed the analysis, we might come up with a lot of codes, which may be difficult to control or organize. We also found value in the fact that the two researchers coding the DEI statements had experience interacting with banking institutions as international students and faculty. With this understanding, Isidore Dorpenyo and Meghalee Das did an inductive reading of the diversity statements. While coding, we kept our research questions and the purpose of the article in mind. This was especially important because we analyzed the interview data before conducting the textual analysis of the DEI data. This was done to find out how banks' diversity statements responded to some of the concerns of our interview participants. For instance, how did the banks implicitly/ explicitly create an inclusive work environment? How did they communicate about diverse leadership? What are the commitments of the banks toward diversity and how did they align with interviewees' interests or conflict with what participants expected? We conducted the coding in two rounds: an initial stage and a second round of coding.

Initial and Second Coding

Isidore Dorpenyo and Meghalee Das read the spreadsheet data and coded the diversity statements of the nine banks. Isidore did the first round of reading and came up with 9 codes and passed them to Meghalee, who came up with her codes as well. We found out that most of their codes and themes were similar, and needed only minor modifications as we organized these codes. For instance, Meghalee had a code "hiring practices" while Isidore had "recruitment practices." When we met for the second round of coding, we decided to keep Meghalee's code because it captured or summed up a broader array of areas whereas Isidore had them as single codes. Meghalee also came up with three additional codes: *core values*, *initiatives*, which connected with Isidore's "action plan," and *diversity in national/ international demographics* (Table 1).

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Table 1: Initial codes and categorial descriptions

Code	Description	Examples
Commitment to diversity and inclusion	Banks make a statement about diversity	We're committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion—and boldly believe in the power of what we can achieve together. Relentlessly pursuing a diverse culture Everyone and every moment matters. It's a value that guides us to be intentional about diversity, equity, and inclusion at Truist. JPMorgan: "We believe in, and are committed to, a culture of respect and inclusion." US Bank: The overall term "diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI)" describes our commitment to embracing individual differences, enabling equitable outcomes and fostering inclusion. This action helps us drive business growth and makes us stronger, more innovative and more responsive. It furthers the interests of all our stakeholders: investors, customers, employees and communities we serve."
Recruitment practices	Banks discuss how diversity informs their hiring practices	We are focused on attracting, retaining and developing diverse talent, and as a result, have strong representation at all levels. Half of our global workforce are women and more than 47 percent of our U.S. workforce are people of color. Attracting, recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce is essential to our success, providing us with a wealth of skills and ideas, increasing employee engagement and tying us closer to the communities we serve TD "recognizes that our continued success depends on our ability to attract, identify and develop a diverse pool of top talent." … "If you don't embrace diversity in the candidates you interview, you may end up with a team with fewer diverse experiences to drive innovation and creative collaboration." Citi Bank: "As the colleagues who make up world's most **global** bank, we understand how vital it is to deliver a wide range of ideas and solutions to our clients; it's what enables their growth and progress. We are focused on continually refining how we embed diversity into our recruiting efforts **globally**."
Inclusive culture/ environment	Banks discuss how they encourage diverse and inclusion at the workplace	PMorgan Chase is working to drive a diverse and inclusive culture for our employees and our business. We continue to focus on maintaining an inclusive environment that supports everything that makes our colleagues unique and provides resources to help them grow professionally and personally. As part of our ongoing commitment to being a great place to work, we encourage our employees to have courageous conversations as a way to promote inclusion, understanding and positive action by creating awareness of different experiences and perspectives. Our diversity and inclusion strategy provides common direction and clear goals across Wells Fargo. We focus on three areas: Workforce diversity and inclusion. We strive for a culture with inclusive policies and programs that attract, develop, engage, and retain the best talent. Marketplace. We integrate diversity and inclusion into the business decisions we make every day, including how to increase work with diverse vendors and supplier Advocacy. Our all-inclusive culture means every employee matters and is empowered to contribute to our success. A culture where our people are encouraged to bring their whole selves to work and to share their diverse ideas and backgrounds with the goal of always delivering an exceptional customer experience.
Welcoming environment to customers	Banks discuss how they create warm atmosphere for their customers	Our DEI strategy seeks to ensure that all employees, customers and key stakeholders have the opportunity to achieve their full possibilities. D&I at work Building and promoting a diverse and inclusive workplace helps us identify the best talent to meet the changing needs of the people we reach. Through surveys, Business Resource Groups and ongoing education opportunities, we foster a culture of lifelong learning. In the community We actively strive to reflect the communities in which we live, work and play. TD Bank: "Diversity and inclusion are part of our fundamental values that help us support our customers, colleagues and communities."

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Code	Description	Examples
Diverse leadership/government	Banks make reference to diverse leadership and government	We continue to leverage diverse slates and panels, ensuring that women globally and/or racial and ethnic minorities in the U.S. are interviewed for our open roles and sit on the interview panels. These practices are important levers for us to ultimately achieve our goal of increasing representation of women and U.S. minorities Citi Bank: "Executives from our CEO's leadership team lead our 10 Affinities that represent the broad ranging demographics of our employees: Asian Heritage, Black Heritage, Citi Salutes (Military Veterans), Citi Women, Disability: Enabling Diverse Abilities, Generations, Hispanic/Latino Heritage, Multicultural, Parents and Pride (LGBTQ)."
Action plans/terms/future plans	Banks lay down plans to further diversity	Through consistent initiatives, including summer learning camps, curriculum integrations, community clubs and mentorship, Visions provides experiential STEM learnings for youth to help build skills, confidence and empower them to pursue careers to help them fully participate in the workforce of tomorrow. Director and Board Member, recently discussed the movement against racial injustice that is sweeping the United States and the world.
Addressing structural barriers	Banks discuss how they address structural barriers	Building better communities. All people and communities should have an equal opportunity to thrive. So we're actively addressing the needs of our communities to help everyone achieve more. Through our Truist Community Benefits Plan, we'll lend or invest $60 billion to low- and moderate-income (LMI) borrowers and in LMI communities from 2020 to 2022. Our Truist Cares initiative supports the needs of clients, communities, and teammates in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. JPMorgan: "Structural barriers in the U.S. have created profound racial inequalities, made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic. The existing racial wealth gap puts a strain on families' economic mobility and restricts the U.S. economy. How we'll advance racial equity: Building on our existing investments, we will harness our expertise in business, policy and philanthropy and commit $30 billion over the next five years to drive an inclusive recovery, support employees and break down barriers of systemic racism.
Workforce demographics	Banks discuss how their employees represent diverse populations they serve	We believe that we are all accountable and responsible for promoting inclusion and work to continually enhance our capabilities. Executives from our CEO's leadership team lead our 10 Affinities that represent the broad ranging demographics of our employees: Asian Heritage, Black Heritage, Citi Salutes (Military Veterans), Citi Women, Disability: Enabling Diverse Abilities, Generations, Hispanic/Latino Heritage, Multicultural, Parents and Pride (LGBTQ).
Diversity strategy	Banks outline the diversity strategies undertaken by them	Now is the time to educate, motivate and inspire female leaders to ensure diverse voices are shaping the technology that will impact our future. Because without diversity among their ranks, new technologies risk reflecting only a portion of the population. Step one in the journey begins with education and providing greater access to STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) programming at a young age. In this spirit, TD has joined forces with organizations from across Canada, including ACTUA and FIRST Robotics Canada to inspire a passion for STEM early on, with the goal of inspiring post-secondary studies and careers in the field. Secondly, we need to provide opportunities for female talent currently working in STEM – helping women build their networks and find and create relationships with mentors.
Core values	Banks describe how diversity and inclusion is their core values and guides all their decisions and practices	US Bank: "We focus on diversity and inclusion because it's the right thing to do. It's core to who we are, and it allows us to achieve our full potential as an organization… Embracing diversity, championing equity and fostering inclusion are business imperatives for U.S. Bank, and a fundamental part of everything that makes us who we are: our brand, business, talent pool, communities and more." Citi Bank: "Embracing diverse teams, ideas and possibilities helps us drive growth and progress because it's a key part of who we are and how we thrive." Bank of New York Mellon: "Our enduring ambition is to build the best global team—one that is inclusive of differing perspectives, backgrounds and experiences, and represents the increasingly varied markets and clients we serve."

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Code	Description	Examples
Initiatives & Programs	Banks share examples of initiatives taken to encourage and promote diversity and inclusion.	TD Bank: "The Ready Commitment," corporate social responsibility blueprint designed to help open doors for a more inclusive tomorrow.
		A video series in honor of Black History Month focusing on the journeys and narratives of black voices, and inspiring stories of everyday leaders that demonstrate the shared experiences that connect us all. "Women in Technology" network provides female talent with learning and development, as well as support and motivation in the early stages of their careers.
		JPMorgan: "Advancing Black Pathways" Employee Programs, an initiative that builds on our existing efforts to help the black community chart stronger paths towards economic success and empowerment. "Women on the Move," providing women with opportunities to succeed in their professional and personal lives. "Business Resource Groups," inclusive groups that collaborate across regions and within the BRG network – enabling employees to share ideas, grow professionally and connect with colleagues who have similar interests.
		US Bank: "Community Possible" giving platform, we invest our time, resources and passion in economic development by supporting efforts to create stable jobs, better homes and vibrant communities"
Diversity in national origin/ international demographics	Banks refer to national origin diversity in terms of ownership or leadership	U.S. Bank: "Diversity refers to human dimensions including ability, age, education, ethnicity, gender identity, gender, national origin, race, sexual orientation, social class, veteran status or religious or ethical value systems."
		"U.S. Bank requires a company to be at least 51% owned, controlled and managed by one or more minority group members, women, veterans, disabled or LGBT person(s). Minority groups include the following: • African Americans • Asian Indian Americans • Asian Pacific Americans • Hispanic Americans • Native Americans."
		Citi Bank: "At Citi, our employees reflect the remarkable range of cultures and perspectives of our clients across the more than 160 countries and jurisdictions where we do business—a powerful advantage that combines global insights with deep local knowledge."
		PNC Bank: "Our other multicultural marketing efforts include: Bilingual employees at our branches who meet the needs of our diverse segment customers. Many of these same branches also display customized bilingual signage and digital content in Spanish and Polish. More than 9,000 ATMs featuring 10 or more languages, including Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish and Vietnamese. The ATMs are also equipped with Spanish and English audio capabilities for the visually impaired. Various resources for Hispanic consumers in Spanish, including a designated Customer Care Center line, 1-866-HOLA-PNC, educational materials and webpages in Spanish, including pnc.com/espanol, pnc.com/siempreabierto and pncvirtualwallet.com/es. Customized webpages developed for Polish, Chinese, Korean, Asian Indian and LGBTQ customers. Interpretation services offered in more than 240 languages in our branches and over the phone."
		Wells Fargo: "We define diversity as the unique combination of various dimensions that makes each of us different from and similar to others. Those dimensions can include—but are not be limited to—age, gender, ethnic heritage, race, physical or mental abilities, sexual orientation, values, religion/spiritual practice, income, family status, education, and geographic location."

Table 2: Emergent themes and descriptions

Theme	Explanation
Mission and values	Banks state their commit to diversity and inclusion through their mission and core values
Inclusive strategies	Banks outline their action plans for inclusivity, various initiatives taken by them, diversity strategies, future plans, and address structural barriers
Inclusive workforce	Banks claim to practice inclusivity in the workforce through their recruitment practices, which they say are reflected in the demographics of their workforce, which in some cases also include hiring people of different national origins
Inclusive environment	Banks claim to develop an inclusive work culture and environment by creating a welcoming environment for customers, which also involves building inclusive office designs
Leadership	Banks claim to practice diversity in leadership roles across their offices around the world that represent a wide range of demographics of their employees

When we met for the second round of coding, we had several negotiations, which led us to revise and organize our codes, and, we came up with these overarching themes: mission and values; inclusive strategies (included action plan, initiatives, addressing structural barriers, and future plans); inclusive workforce (including recruitment practices, workforce demographics); inclusive environment (including inclusive culture/environment, welcoming environment for customers, inclusive office design); and leadership (including diverse leadership/government). Table 2 lists the themes, followed by an explanation and our insights into these themes.

Text Mining of Diversity and Inclusion Statements

We used text mining to gain further information on the key themes prevalent in the diversity statements of the financial institutions. Combined with the data from our manual content analysis and participant interviews, these emerging themes helped us gain better insight into whether the DEI claims of financial institutions align with their actions, and the resultant experiences immigrants have with these financial institutions. We build on TPC research on big data and text mining (Graham et al., 2015; Frith, 2017; Roundtree, 2019), intersectionality (Gonzales, 2019; Medina & Haas, 2018), and research that addresses immigrant status and social justice (Johnson et al., 2008; Balzhiser et al., 2019; Walwema, 2021), to examine the diversity and inclusion statements for 100 additional banks. Text mining helped us trace the themes from the close reading of the top 9 banks in a set of 100 random banks identified from the first 100

diversity statements of financial institutions retrieved from a Google search. The sample included 100 statements (766 pages). We used Orange and LIWC for text mining. Orange is an open-source machine learning and data visualization software. LIWC is a software that analyzes word use and sentiment.

RESULTS

Results of Content Analysis of Diversity Statement from Selected Banks

Mission and values

As we studied the diversity statements of nine banks, the most recurring and prominent theme emerging in our analysis was banks' stating their commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, also evident in their mission and core values. For example, in Table 2, we find banks like Truist, JPMorgan, and US Bank prioritizing equitable outcomes, fostering inclusion and committing to diversity in both core values and practices. These banks also stated that they consider diversity a crucial part of their company identity: US Bank claimed embracing diversity is a "fundamental part of everything that makes us who we are" and Citibank claimed diverse teams, ideas and possibilities help them drive growth and progress because it's "a key part of who we are and how we thrive." Additionally, Bank of New York Mellon states that they are committed to inclusivity on a global level by valuing differing perspectives, backgrounds and experiences and building a team that "represents the increasingly varied markets and clients we serve."

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Inclusive strategies

This theme encompasses all the different tangible initiatives and practices, as well strategies that banks state that they have developed, executed, or planned to execute to address structural barriers and foster inclusion and diversity. For example, TD Bank provides experiential STEM learning opportunities for youth, especially young women, to help build skills and empower them to participate in the workforce; US Bank is invested in creating "stable jobs, better homes and vibrant communities;" and JPMorgan acknowledges the structural barriers that have created racial inequalities and wealth gap in the United States and commits to investing $30 billion "to drive an inclusive recovery, support employees and break down barriers of systemic racism."

Inclusive workforce national origin

Most of the banks we studied outlined how diversity and inclusion informed their recruitment practices. For example, Bank of America discussed how they were "focused on attracting, retaining and developing diverse talent" in their global workforce; TD Bank recognized the importance of having diverse employees for continued success and to "drive innovation and creative collaboration;" and Citi Bank was "focused on continually refining how we embed diversity into our recruiting efforts globally." PNC Bank has various multicultural initiatives like bilingual employees, customized bilingual signage and digital content, ATMs with 10 or more languages, and Spanish and English audio capabilities for the visually impaired.

Inclusive environment

Banks state that they prioritize creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for employees and customers. Wells Fargo focuses on workforce diversity and inclusion to create a "culture with inclusive policies and programs that attract, develop, engage, and retain the best talent;" PNC Bank encourages employees "to bring their whole selves to work and to share their diverse ideas and backgrounds" which they think is crucial to delivering exceptional customer service; and US Bank uses surveys, Business Resource Groups, and education opportunities to learn about the community. Diversity and inclusion values guide TD Bank to support customers, workforces, and communities, where the bank also applies accessible building designs to maintain a welcoming, barrier-free culture.

Leadership

Although the diversity statements focused more on company values and initiatives related to the workforce, community, and customer, they briefly mentioned how leadership strategies are also informed by the overall goal of fostering diversity in the organization. For example, Citibank mentioned how their leadership team represented the wide-ranging demographics of their employees, which included Black people, Asians, military veterans, women, disabled people, people with Hispanic/Latino heritage, and those of the LGBTQ community. More detailed descriptions of leadership strategies are available in the leadership and governance documents of these banks.

Results from Text Mining

Text mining mirrored content analysis findings. Diversity (n=1577), inclusion (n=1122), equity (n=334), and access (n=149) were important reoccurring text themes in the diversity and inclusion statements for 100 banks analyzed. Topic modeling using latent semantics indexing confirmed that diversity and inclusion were topic keywords that determined all text clusters. Work (n=330), employees (n=424), and women (n=436) were also important designates of a third text grouping. Policies (n=302) emerged as a unique topic keyword for a fourth text cluster; gender (n=235), a fifth; technology (n=47), a sixth. Specific actions such as products and services supporting these efforts (n=46), and employee resource groups (n=39) were mentioned less frequently and not enlisted in topic models. The statements mentioned communities that the financial institutions served (n=672)—including mentioning Asian (n=35), Black or African (n=163), Hispanic or Latinx (n=85), native or indigenous groups (n=37), different sexual orientation (n=47), communities with disabilities (n=81), race (n=85), ethnicity (n=44), sexuality or LGBTQ+ (n=55), and different religions (n=40)—without detailing plans or strategies for the specific communities, ethnicities, races, and other intersectional identities in question. Banks used first person plural—we (n=1515) to outline their policy, thereby conveying a personal approach to the messaging. There were only 23 mentions of international concerns and only one explicit mention of immigration. Bank rhetoric acknowledged the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion, but access was not as prominent a theme. The statements

often mentioned the workplace and employees as a vehicle for supporting DEI, and they recognized the wide range of diverse communities, but they did not specify activities or strategies for promoting DEI. Finally, they referenced their policies as an important mechanism for supporting DEI. Overall, the random sample of bank statements were strong in statements of equitable outcomes and diverse workforce and environment. However, they were light on strategies, although they referenced their policies as a potential vehicle for accomplishing DEI objectives.

Results of Participant Interviews

As indicated above, the DEI statements posted on the website of financial institutions paint a neat and tidy commitment to diversity, inclusion, and excellence, but conversations with interview participants reveal some uncomfortable issues that immigrants face in their dealings with banks: lack of proper intercultural communication with immigrants, access to banking tied to the status of an individual in this country, lack of proper explanation of immigration terms, lack of representation of immigrants, and information overload. In general, participants in this study recommend broad areas that banks and financial institutions can improve upon if they really want to demonstrate their commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. We present a summary of immigrant concerns and recommendations to banks in Table 3, which is followed by a more comprehensive discussion of problems participants in this study communicated.

Theme 1: Oppressive banking process that makes it difficult to open accounts

Out of the 13 participants, 11 of them reported their frustration with banks regarding the documents and paperwork required of immigrants. Most of the participants said that banking is too tied to immigration status, which makes it difficult for immigrants to open accounts or enjoy equal access to banking. Jennifer stated that immigrants' problems with banks are "systemic. It's completely a system. It's coming from the day you enter the United States and what kind of status you're coming in." This participant discussed how she had to wait for four years before she could open a bank account because she arrived in the United States on an H-4 visa. This visa status meant that she had to depend on her husband, whom she joined here, to do everything for her. She explained, "I was completely dependent on my husband for everything. That was both humiliating for a person who has degrees. And the United States has this mandate that unless you have a work visa, you cannot apply for your social security number." Jennifer is referring to the fact that one must have a job offer to be able to apply for a social security number, which is difficult for those on H-4 visas, which have various employment restrictions. She desperately wanted to open an account but none of the banks gave her the opportunity to do so. She described this process as an abuse and stated, "One is subjected to so many kinds of abuse coming from the system. So, it's more systemic than a problem of a particular institution." Roselyn also describes an experience she and her

Table 3. Immigrants' concerns and recommendations to improve interactions with U.S. banks

Problems that the U.S. banks must consider when serving and interacting with immigrants	Recommendations from Immigrants who participated in this study
The documentation that immigrants are required to submit and have approved is overwhelming and restricts immigrants' access to banking institutions.	Banks should remove any unnecessary banking documentation and consider policy initiatives that would make immigrant banking less arduous.
The terminology that banking institutions use when interacting with immigrants are not clearly defined.	Banks should ensure that communication intended for immigrants is tailored for immigrants.
Banking employees lack a shared understanding of how financial systems operate outside of the U.S.	Banks should provide intercultural and diversity training for banking employees so that they understand that their clients may have had completely different experiences interacting with banks outside the United States.
Banking institutions must do a better job of valuing the qualifications and educational institutions of immigrant applicants	Banks should ensure that diversity and inclusion initiatives include immigrants in hiring, promotion, and fair and just treatment in the workplace.

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husband had when they attempted to open an account with American Savings Express Bank. She recalled that one of the requirements for the bank is that one has to be "a U.S. citizen or a resident alien." Francis also reveals how Bank of America has a space for people who are opening their account to indicate whether they are citizen or resident alien.

Theme 2: Lack of Proper Communication Channels

Emmanuel explained how lack of proper or better communication led to the closure of his account. He opened an account online and submitted all of his documents (I-20, passport, admission letter, etc.) online, "but you didn't get the sense that I needed to take all these other documents again … and go to the banking hall later to have the account certified that you have actually opened it." He later realized that his account had been canceled after he unsuccessfully tried to make some transactions. He called the bank and they told him "the account was closed because I didn't go to the bank itself to certify with the physical copies of the account that has been opened. And it was just frustrating." Roselyn sums up the call for better communication, in this way: "If they would do a better job communicating their other products, targeting, or even just what does it mean to have checking, or credit– more like even educational workshops for immigrants … some type of even a glossary."

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF STUDY

This study reveals many of the challenges immigrants encounter with U.S. banking institutions and opportunities for technical communicators to help banks treat immigrants with dignity and respect. The results of this study reveal that, despite extensive and detailed diversity statements, the banking sector is still a site of injustice, dehumanization, and marginalization. The interviews with immigrants of color and our content analysis of the banks' DEI statements show a clear disconnect between the top U.S. banks' DEI statements and the lived experiences of immigrants, many of whom do not believe they have received equitable and inclusive treatment in their interactions with banks in the United States.

As mentioned previously, the most prominent theme that emerged from our analysis of bank diversity statements was their claims to commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. In our analysis of diversity and inclusion statements we observed that "banks like Truist, JPMorgan, and US Bank claim to prioritize equitable outcomes, fostering inclusion, and committing to diversity in both core values and practices." However, based on our interviews with immigrants, too often the practice of fostering equitable outcomes and inclusive practices does not seem to extend to immigrants. Many of the immigrants we interviewed mentioned the difficulty they had in understanding the banking process. Having come from another country with a different banking system, these immigrants would naturally have a difficult time navigating the U.S. banking system. This difficulty represents a real barrier to equity and inclusion for immigrants.

Another important aspect of the DEI statements we analyzed was the emphasis on how crucial diversity is to the culture of banks. Most of the DEI statements we analyzed included national origin as part of their definition of diversity. This is important because mentioning national origin specifically means that the bank is acknowledging that they desire immigrants as customers. However, as pointed out by our interview participants, some of the strategies used by banks to foster inclusion did not address their unique needs.

Furthermore, while both banks and their international customers prioritize equitable outcomes and recognized policies as an important mechanism for fulfilling the promise of DEI, immigrant clients claimed that some policies caused disparity rather than diminished it.

Each of the banks we studied mentioned some kind of strategy and/or initiative aimed at increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion at their institution. However, most of these initiatives are geared toward professional development of employees, hiring strategies, programs for the local communities, etc., and less toward customer facing practices. As our focus is the experience of immigrants of color living in the United States, we have observed a disconnect between banks' commitment towards customers of different nationalities and actual action, and there is a need for better execution when taking abstract values and turning them into real practices for better customer support.

Participants mentioned several problem areas that could become areas of focus for banks, which translate into initiatives that will have a real impact on

including immigrants in the banking system. One of these problem areas is the difficulty immigrants have in navigating the bureaucracy of both the banking and immigration system. Immigrants trying to access the banking system face a barrage of paperwork, often in a language they do not understand well, along with contradictory statements regarding what services they can access and when. Banks interested in including immigrants in the banking system could work with immigrants to identify these bureaucratic barriers and create initiatives to remove the barriers such as a more streamlined system and more personal assistance. If the barriers identified by banks match our own findings, these initiatives may include reducing the amount of complicated paperwork required by immigrants, adding more information regarding banking procedures that is easily accessible in multiple ways, and creating communication for immigrants that is tailored to their linguistic and cultural needs.

Another frequently occurring theme in the DEI statements we analyzed was a commitment to an inclusive workforce. Banks mentioned their commitment to hiring a diverse group of workers and creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for their employees. Although banks may be actively working to increase the diversity of their workforce, the participants of this study pointed out that bank employees still lack the cultural competence to effectively work with immigrants. Banking customers come to the bank with a wide variety of experiences from various banking systems. They also come from a wide variety of social and cultural norms. Language barriers and cultural context are significant impediments to inclusion in banking.

Recent scholarship in technical communication has explored barriers to equity and inclusion (Philips & Deleon, 2022; Rose et al., 2017; Sims, 2022; Walwema & Carmichael, 2021), and the experiences of the immigrants we interviewed point to the need for technical communicators to pay more attention to the cultural barriers immigrants must navigate. As Phillips and Deleon (2022) point out in their examination of technical communication academic programs, lack of familiarity with bureaucracy, contending with politics, arduous communication interactions, and oppressive behaviors "compound to create unsafe, unwelcoming, and unsupportive environments" (p. 208). The same may be said of any institution, including banks. The

barriers reported by the interview participants in this study show how the many important concerns faced by immigrants, such as lack of access to information in one's native language, inadequate explanations of banking processes, and being called an "alien," can make a bank unsafe, unwelcoming, and unsupportive.

Walwema and Carmichael (2021) point out that although scholarship on diversity has increased, barriers do exist for immigrants who are applying for jobs after their graduate education. The frustrations and the sense of exclusion felt by immigrant scholars seeking jobs are similar to the frustrations immigrants face when they try to open bank accounts or when they deal with financial institutions. Walwema and Carmichael (2021) note, and we agree, that it is important to understand "from the perspective of those who suffer most from exclusion" (p. 117). Indeed, if we want to advocate for the marginalized and those who intentionally or unintentionally encounter systemic barriers, then it is necessary to understand from their perspective. The findings in this study add to the growing scholarship in our field that calls for closer attention to lived experiences of marginalized populations. In the next section, we propose ideas that can help financial institutions to achieve their full commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Proposals for Change: Toward an Inclusive Banking Process

Expanding forms of customer identity verification to open accounts

Jennifer suggested some proposals for change that will ease immigrants' access to financial services and financial independence. She believes in order for the system to work to favor immigrants, institutions should have provisions for applying for bank accounts just like they do for driver's licenses: "They give you a driving license if you have a valid [immigration] status. Some things should be there, like it should start from giving the right to the person to work." This means that when an individual can work, they are eligible to receive a social security card, thereby earn money and access financial services. As researchers, from lived experiences, we know that not giving rights to dependent immigrants to work is a very frustrating process. Isidore, for instance, has heard stories from individuals who left their meaningful jobs in their country to be with their

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partners, but they could not work because the system made them dependent on the spouses who arrived in the United States first. So, spouses arriving later either become "housewives" or "stay-at-home-husbands," thus often stripped of their professional identity and financial access. According to the USA PATRIOT Act, acceptable forms of identification required by banks to open an account can include a customer's social security number and driver's license, as well as foreign government-issued identification and consular identification cards (Paulson et al., 2006).

While it is true that passports or visas are accepted as primary forms of identification (ID), and banks such as Chase accept student IDs with photo too (Chase, 2023), many banks require a secondary ID. For example, Bank of America accepts the following secondary IDs: Foreign driver's license with photo or U.S. driver's license, U.S. issued employment/work ID card or badge, debit or major credit card with Visa or Mastercard logo, major retail credit card from a nationally well-known company, U.S. Department of State Diplomat ID, and Mexican Voter Registration Card (Bank of America, 2023). But there are many immigrants who do not drive or cannot afford to buy a car, many are not authorized to work, most come here with no credit and are also unaware of the concept of accumulating credit, and the process of getting a debit card has its own set of identification requirements. By expanding secondary ID options based on the immigration and employment status of the individual, banks can make the process of opening accounts more inclusive. For example, for international students on F-1 visas, an alternative form of identification can be a current enrollment letter from the registrar of the university, a school-issued ID, or the form I-20, a U.S. Department of Homeland Security document issued by the university. For spouses of primary visa holders, such as H-4 visa holders who may not be able to work and don't have social security cards, state photo identification card is another option. Similarly, anyone who does not own a car or cannot drive, could submit a state photo identification card instead of a driver's license.

Improved communication tailored toward immigrants

Here, participants suggest two areas that financial institutions can improve upon. First, they suggest banks and financial institutions properly define terms they use when they are communicating with immigrants. Out of the 13 interviewees, 11 reveal that financial institutions assume immigrants understand terms banks use. For instance, Roselyn indicated that when she wanted to open an account, one of the requirements was to pass "the substantial test" and she did not know what that meant. The bank did not explain it on their website, so she had to use Google to see what that test entails. Roselyn would have appreciated some definition of their use of the term "alien residence." She was not sure what the term meant. She admitted that the bank tried to explain it on their website, but it was still not helpful. She suggested that they change the language and

> provide more information so that we can see that it includes us. It includes the different immigration statuses. Yeah, so either they have maybe a portion on their website that explains this much into detail, and they provide a link to that website of that information…so more information, more information for us and that will help make the language more inclusive.

Intercultural and diversity training

Participants suggest intercultural communication skills and training for banking institutions. Monica's words sum this recommendation up nicely when she stated, "I think banks in the United States don't understand that immigrants don't have the background of how the banking [system] works here." Isidore recalled when he wanted to secure a loan to get his first car. He was surprised when the bank he was working with denied him the loan because, according to bank officials, he had not accrued enough credit history. Isidore did not know what that meant because in his country of origin credit history or credit score is not as important. The official even said Isidore could not secure the loan because "he didn't owe" any institution. The only way an institution could lend you money was if you owed. In essence, institutions trust people who owe money. That was contrary to what Isidore knew from his country. Growing up, he was taught that to build your credibility, you must not owe anybody so the idea of getting loans or owing was a scary venture. Therefore, it was a bit surprising that in America, trust is based on how much you owe and how you made such payments. Banks need to

understand their clients, especially immigrant clients who come with different cultural backgrounds and expectations. Jasmine described this recommendation as focusing on client needs and ensuring a better user experience while Monica stated

> in order to service your clients better, you need to understand that they come from different backgrounds, so maybe you need some type of training … some type of training about diversity or even kind of not only a general training about cultural bias … it's a little bit more like socio-cultural and historic-intercultural and everything … they need this type of awareness just also to have more targeting advertising materials and things. They have flyers. I mean they should include how to do transfers and how much they would cost and what does that mean?

Jasmine also proposed that banking institutions need to translate some of the information they have into different languages. She stressed the importance of translation to business and banking. If bank administrators notice that there are a lot of Indian or Spanish speakers at their local branches, they should hire a translator.

Diverse and inclusive hires/management

Two of the participants were very emphatic about recommending that banks hire for diversity because they have had experiences working with or looking for a job in a bank. These two participants reveal biased policies and treatment of immigrants. Joanna shared her experience searching for a job with a bank in the United States. Joanna has a first degree in Banking and Finance (from Ghana) and master's degree in International Banking and Finance from London. When she set out to look for a job in the banking sector, she visited a bank whose employers asked her to go online, but she wanted a more personal conversation than just browsing for details online. When she had the opportunity to speak with hiring managers, the first question they asked was, "Do you want to be a bank teller?" She wanted a job that fit her graduate degree and work experience. She describes tellering as "more like checking out role. When you go to most shops, what you see is people of color doing checking. And if you transfer it to the banking hall, checking out role is

more like tellering …. I have been a financial analyst. I could do the mortgage. It's just a matter of training and transferring my knowledge to fit into the American experience." She believed the question about whether she would like to be a teller can be attributed to bias and stated,

> Why would you think that I am looking into tellering when all I want to do is talk to you and ask you about the job opportunities and get more personal experience with the bank before I apply. I think they should have approached me with a very open mind. Very open mind in that I expected them to have laid down even if they didn't have an opening or any vacancies to fill. They could mention all the job roles they have…and then my qualifications. And we could talk about the best fit for me and how much I could also use my knowledge to help.

Joanna is of the view that banks and financial institutions should "walk the talk" of diversity by being open to hiring more immigrants: "I expect banking—if anything at all, they should go over and beyond to catch more immigrants. Because the banking industry in this—more by immigrants than it is by natives or white people here. We do a lot of international transactions which calls for extra charges."

Interestingly, Jasmine described her experience working in a branch in an unjust working environment. She starts by saying, "I've been unfairly treated when it comes to banking." She explained how people looked at her or talked to her differently when she walked into a banking hall. She provided examples of how people would say they struggled to hear what she was saying because she "has an accent." In addition to her accent, the participant discussed how despite her master's degree, she witnessed white people who did not even have a university degree be promoted while she still remains in the same position as she was when hired. Jasmine stated,

> My branch manager doesn't even have a high school diploma; she's been working the job for a long time, so that's how she got the promotion. My district manager doesn't have a degree. Even when it comes to promotion, you work hard. You show up all the time. You don't even have call-outs. But

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when it comes to promotion, you don't get it, to the management level, you don't get it. I think the country has gone beyond words now. Right now, anybody can say anything, right? Everybody's trying to save the planet or trying to be inclusive and all that. They kind of run the best campaign slogans and everything. But I just feel like they have to show it. Like you going to a workplace and you're able to see diversity when you look around. You can't run 13 or 14 branches and just one person …. Out of 14 branches, like 13 of your bank managers are White and just one person is Asian. Let me have a Black branch manager in my district ….

Jasmine believes that it is important for financial institutions and banks to empower "immigrants that work for them." Institutions cannot promote people because they think they are

outspoken. What do you mean by he is outspoken? I am always fixing this person's mistakes here, spending hours with back-office to correct mistakes, but somehow the person is more outspoken so has to get promoted. I think they should go beyond words. They should empower from within, have their managerial team look like the customers they serve.

Theophilus shared similar concerns as Joanna and Jasmine. He thinks it will be "nice if you go to a banking hall and you speak to people that actually represent the country." Importantly, if banks and financial institutions want to profess diversity, their "leadership, senior leadership, middle management should reflect, right? Because if that doesn't happen, then you are not capturing a diverse view." He ends with an important question that reiterates Jasmine's call for empowerment from within:

So, low-income earners, right, in their industry, what policies are in place for these people to advance, right because I don't think somebody wants to be a teller for 20, 35, years. So, what can they do? What can they do to make sure that they are providing the right educational services, funds, and all that, to support these communities?

In addition to the biased hiring and promotion practices shared by our participants, Monica makes

another important observation regarding the culture of banks that discriminate against immigrants:

as I have been saying, is banking is—they make it more difficult for immigrants. My experience has been that when I was an immigrant, everything was more difficult, right? You know how it feels like they don't trust you? They don't trust. So, they need to make sure of that you're not a thief, right? I don't know if they think you're going to rob their bank, right? I mean, 2 cents that I'm trying to have there, right? Kind of they don't trust you. It feels like they don't trust you, so you have to prove yourself that you're worthy to have their business or stuff like that, right? And another perception that—I know it's ridiculous. But I noticed when my husband was with me at the bank, people were more willing to help, which I hated because I'm like, hey, I don't know if it's because I'm a woman, which that happens everywhere, right or because he's a White American man. They assume that they would know more than me. So, I remember noticing because I'm a social scientist, so I look.

CONCLUSION

As calls for diversity, equity, and inclusion in our field grow, we must pay attention to material conditions of immigrant students/scholars in TPC academic programs. Walwema and Carmichael (2021) point to one aspect of the material conditions we need to focus on, that is, help immigrant scholars negotiate the convoluted job search process, while Rose et al. (2017) notify us about the struggles immigrants encounter when they sign up for health insurance. Similar to the aforementioned articles, our research points out another concern: it is not easy for immigrant students/scholars to open bank accounts and access other financial resources.

Although equitable access to information and resources is severely limited for immigrants to the United States, technical and professional communicators have the opportunity to use their skills to bridge some of the gaps in equity identified by interview participants. Sims (2022) suggests the need for technical communicators to collaborate with powerful stakeholders to work on socially just

documents that will empower vulnerable people who may be suffering from trauma due to policies of exclusion enacted through technical documents. As stated by Sims,

> TPC has the potential to either intensify the oppression previously experienced by these audiences or empower them to act for their own well-being. Therefore, technical and professional instructors and practitioners have an ethical responsibility to communicate with these audiences through methods that are socially just. (2022)

Concerns expressed by immigrants we interviewed about lack of clarity in documents requested by banks, the need for translation of documents, the need for further explanation of technical jargon used by banks, and laxity in the documents requested before an account is opened are calls that emphasize the usefulness of plain language, accessibility, and human-centered design. If, for example, there are federal or international laws that limit a bank's ability to provide access or that give the impression of inequity, banks can provide context in plain language to explain the source of discrepancies. These concerns also call on technical communicators to increase research and practice in translation studies. In an interview about the importance of translation, Laura Gonzales (2022) acknowledged that one of the strengths of technical communicators is our ability to pay attention to language: "using plain language to reach broader audiences, writing clear and specific documentation, collaborating with stakeholders to ensure work toward accessibility" (interview with Laura Gonzales, 2022). Gonzales went on to bemoan the narrow frameworks that we use to study language. Because approaches to the study of language are narrow, we fail to properly capture the multilingual reality we find ourselves in. Responding to a question about how technical communicators can establish connections with practitioners outside the academy, Gonzales (2022) encouraged technical communicators to take a simple but pragmatic step: we need to "get involved in what is happening in our local communities—to see what the community needs, what actions are being taken in the continuous fight for justice and equality, and to connect with folks who have been doing the

work to see if and how we can help." Our research has exposed the various ways banks and financial institutions harm immigrants and make them feel less welcome. As expressed by Laura Gonzales, it becomes our responsibility to connect with local banks to work with them to design documents that empower immigrants. We should not wait to be invited to participate in local affairs. Rather, we should willingly offer our expertise. Actually, Participant 13 reiterated some of the calls for collaboration with local communities or, in our case, local banks in these words:

> **Monica:** Now that you and the other researchers doing this important research, I'm looking forward for the results. I don't want to put pressure on you. You know what I mean? And I hope you have the opportunity not necessarily to publish because sometimes I feel like when we are doing research, we communicate only to other researchers. This is something that I hope you can do some outreach also, right? I hope you can communicate–
>
> **Researcher:** I know. That's a good one. I never thought about it.
>
> **Monica:** Just propose that, right? How do you translate the results of your research to some outreach beyond papers? Because I'm sure papers would come from this. Beyond papers, how do you do some outreach? How do we make sure this will benefit all the migrants and the banking relations? How your findings are going to be translated to benefit?

Monica is calling for actionable steps that will translate into real-world consequences. This is a challenge to be engaged citizens of our local communities as opposed to the privileged research position we assume in our universities. This is a call to use our rhetorical skills or our "specialized knowledge to serve" (Bowdon, 2004, p. 329) stakeholders in our communities. Rose et al. (2017), for example, use their expertise in usability and user experience to evaluate the usability of a guidebook about how to enroll in health insurance and provide guidance on how immigrants who struggle to sign

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up for health insurance can do so. By this act, they demonstrate how to use rhetorical skills to serve their local community.

Sims also encourages technical communicators to collaborate with stakeholders to design accessible documents or human-centered designs for social justice. Sims (2022) suggests that if we are to succeed, then we need to integrate plain language both in our practices and pedagogy (p. 11). Plain language as a tool for social justice has been advanced by scholars in our field (Jones & Williams, 2017; Jones et al., 2012; Willerton, 2015). To be clear, plain language communicates complex information in an accessible and understandable way to readers. Willerton (2015) believes that plain language is one way technical communicators can do ethical work (p. 1), while Jones and Williams (2017) confidently proclaim that plain language will enable technical communicators to pursue issues of "human rights and human dignity because language accessibility in documents plays a large role in how citizens engage in civic and social activities" (p. 412).

Thus, technical communicators have the skills and tools to involve immigrants and other stakeholders in efforts to move U.S. banking institutions beyond DEI statements to socially just action. By presenting an analysis of the DEI statements and initiatives of the top banks in the country and by juxtaposing it with the lived experiences of diverse customers like immigrants of color, this article can help practitioners reflect on measures that are working towards their goal of achieving equity in the workplace and areas where there might be a divide between policies and their execution. The article emphasizes the importance of using inclusive language, especially on websites, which professional and business communicators can review, test with a multicultural customer base, and make modifications, if necessary. The article also makes practical suggestions which practitioners can benefit from, such as offering alternative forms of identification that can be accepted for non-residents to open bank accounts. Promoting financial inclusion in the form of access to credit, savings accounts, investment opportunities, and other initiatives is not only a social and ethical responsibility of banks, but it can also help banks expand the customer base by 1) reaching out to marginalized populations who

may not be able to open a bank account due to current limitations, and 2) work toward gaining the trust and sustained business of current customers who feel empowered with increased financial freedom and a sense of belonging, especially as immigrants. In future studies, we encourage technical communication researchers and practitioners to identify unnecessary banking documentation, examine ways to help stakeholders lobby for policy changes that make immigrants' interactions with banks less arduous, and highlight ways that banks can use technology, plain language, and translation to clarify requirements and procedures.

This study is limited insofar as it focuses on nine banks and about a dozen interviews. Text mining suggests that the themes persist in other bank statements, but further quantitative analyses of more statements would help confirm the findings. The findings are not generalizable, because it is a qualitative study with a small sample size. However, as is the case with other such studies, the findings can provide insight with which to formulate a foundation from which to validate with surveys and other more generalizable methods. Qualitative studies are held to the standard of trustworthiness (such as credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability) rather than generalizability. Our findings are trustworthy, but a survey of a representative sample of customers would afford more generalizable findings. Additional natural language processing—particularly of bank policies—would also help identify additional themes and issues. Nevertheless, this article provides unique and useful insights into the disconnects between bank and customers' perceptions of diversity, equity, inclusion, and bank access for immigrant customers of color. The findings present actionable information for technical communicators in the financial sector for using messaging and communication to increase transparency and potentially customer satisfaction, relationship building, and trust.

Finally, there are several practical implications of the findings. First, technical communicators should not only create messages about bank diversity statements, but they should also state explicitly how these general value statements about diversity bear out in particular products and services for international customers. Second, technical communicators in

banking should take great care not to mislead or overstate the benefits of their services or the extent of their multicultural approach. This word of caution not only applies to text explaining the benefits and limitations of international customer service, but it also applies to the images used. Stock photos should reflect the actual demographics of the customer base. Third, technical communicators should create new products for international customers. For example, these products should translate the laws prohibiting and constraining the services that banks can provide their immigrant clients. Full transparency would not only outline the services provided, but also offer context explaining what laws and policies constrain those services. Overall, the research offers practical insights for technical communicators in the banking field and extensions of critical theory in technical communication to include intersectional perspectives on banking communication.

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Are You Committed to Diversity?

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Dr. Miriam F. Williams is Professor of English and Associate Chair of Texas State University's Department of English. Prior to her career in academia, she worked as a caseworker, health and safety inspector, policy analyst, policy writer/editor, and program administrator for State of Texas agencies. Her books and articles focus on public policy writing, race and ethnicity, and critical analysis of historical discourse. Her publications include articles in *Technical Communication*, *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, *Technical Communication Quarterly*, *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, and *Programmatic Perspectives*. Her co-edited book with Dr. Octavio Pimentel, Communicating Race, Ethnicity, and Identity in Technical Communication, received CCCC's 2016 Best Original Collection of Essays in Scientific and Technical Communication award and her co-authored article with Dr. Natasha Jones won the CCCC's 2020 Best Article Reporting Historical Research or Textual Studies in Technical award. She is a Fellow of the Association of Teachers of Technical Writing and Editor-in-Chief of the Society for Technical Communication's journal, *Technical Communication*.

APPENDIX A–INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. Tell us about where you were born and/or where you grew up?
2. What were your experiences with banking institutions before moving to the United States?"
3. Describe any personal experiences you have with financial/banking institutions in the United States where you believe that your status as an immigrant provided you with equal access to financial services?
4. Describe any personal experiences you have with financial/banking institutions in the United States where you believe that your status as an immigrant limited your access to financial services?
5. In what ways might your identity as a person of color and an immigrant affect your perception of banking in the United States.
6. Describe any personal experiences you have with financial institutions that make you trust or distrust banks or lenders.
7. What would diverse and inclusive banking practices mean for you as an immigrant and/or person of color?

Jackie Damrau, Editor

Books Reviewed in This Issue

The reviews provided here are those that are self-selected by the reviewers from a provided list of available titles over a specific date range. Want to become a book reviewer? Contact Dr. Jackie Damrau at jdamrau3@gmail.com for more information.

Every Brain Needs Music: The Neuroscience of Making and Listening to Music

Larry S. Sherman and Dennis Plies. 2023. Columbia University Press. [ISBN 978-0-231-20910-6. 270 pages, including index. US 32.00 (hardcover).]

Every Brain Needs Music: The Neuroscience of Making and Listening to Music is the compilation of a musical neuroscience collaboration—a synopsis of what science knows and does not yet know about how making, practicing, performing, listening, and learning music affects the brain. And beyond that, how those effects spill over into the human experience.

The book's layout attracts the musical reader with its orchestra labels. The introduction is a "Prelude" followed by an "Overture," a short summary of the book. Each subsequent chapter is labeled with a numerical "movement." Music lovers will delight at the final chapter, "Coda," knowing that the coda of a song is a short ending following one or more repeated sections.

The first "movement" begins with a detailed description of basic neuroscience. This includes the most common method of studying the active mind—a procedure called functional magnetic resonance (fMRI). It is very similar to a regular MRI but specific for the brain; it "detects the changes in the flow of blood through tiny vessels in different regions of the brain and changes in blood oxygenation, which represent changes in neuronal activity" (p. 11).

Many of the preliminary results discussed are based on fMRI studies—flawed as it is as a measure of brain activity. One significant discovery with this technique is that music alone (not other sounds) triggers specific areas of the brain. This could redefine what music is from a neuroscience perspective. Also considered was a qualitative survey taken of professional musicians of all types with the results being compiled into general trends within bar graphs included in Appendix A.

The other "movements" (chapters of this book) on practicing, performing, and listening are most relevant to many readers while the "movements" on improvising and composing pertain to a smaller percentage of their audience. All chapters discuss specific studies related to a comparison of music type and how fMRI results (or similar PET scanning) differ and how those results might be interpreted.

All readers who have ever practiced and performed music at any level can relate with the statement, "Mastering a piece can be an ongoing process of unfolding its meaning, in terms of both personal expression and the composer's intention. It's a search. It's never boring, but always challenging in positive ways, for music holds poetic space" (p. 70).

Overall, this collaborative book presents a thorough synopsis of current musical neuroscience research. Unfortunately, much of it is still in the infancy stage as current technology only allows us to surmise connections between brain parts. The specific mechanisms and interchanges beyond the basic neuron level are not yet understood on a chemical level.

In the "Coda," Larry Sherman states, "I'm struck by the amount of computational power it takes to perceive and respond to music and the fact that we still have much to learn about the underlying circuitry involved in how sound is processed in the auditory cortex before traveling to other areas of the brain" (p. 198). This coda is perhaps the prelude to yet another set of movements to be written when this is discovered.

Julie Kinyoun

Julie Kinyoun is an on-call chemistry instructor at various community colleges in Southern California. An avid reader, she enjoys reviewing books that help her become a better educator.

Crisis Communication Strategies: Prepare, respond and recover effectively in unpredictable and urgent situations

Amanda Coleman. 2023. 2nd ed. KoganPage. [ISBN 978-1-3986-0941-9. 230 pages, including index. US$34.99 (softcover).]

Crises, by definition, happen without warning. Communicators must therefore respond without the luxury of enough time to consider their responses. In the second edition of *Crisis Communication Strategies: Prepare, respond and recover effectively in unpredictable and urgent situations*, Amanda Coleman provides the tools you'll need to plan for and successfully respond to crises. The book's packed with strategies for developing and implementing communication plans that work. The key? Coleman repeatedly emphasizes the importance of understanding stakeholder needs by means of audience analysis, of developing stakeholder-specific plans, of planning and testing to confirm the plans work, and of frequently reviewing plans to account for

changes in an organization's operating context. Most technical communicators assume that communication is emotionally neutral, with clarity and concision—skills we need to learn and use even outside a crisis—more important than any emotional context. Coleman sets her book apart from most communication books you've read by repeatedly emphasizing the audience's physical and emotional needs. Crises are emotionally and physically exhausting, both inside the organization and out. Communication can't succeed without mitigating these problems by first gaining the audience's trust through judiciously chosen words accompanied by actions consistent with the words.

Crisis communicators must continuously acknowledge the audience's feelings and fears to provide reassurance. They must listen to and respect the audience's emotional responses. Unlike most technical communication, crisis communication can't be one-way; it must change from dictation to dialogue. Many organizations think that online discussion forums can replace personalized support from organization representatives. During a crisis, they can't.

The best-laid plans fail when they become dusty binders, ignored on someone's shelf. Instead, they must become living parts of the organization's daily processes so that everyone understands their role in a crisis and can immediately act or support the actions of others. Many scrupulous response plans were prepared after the SARS and MERS pandemics; people died during the Covid-19 pandemic because few of these plans were followed. They'd been forgotten.

There are, inevitably, omissions and oddities: Coleman doesn't start by defining "crisis" and listing typical crisis types, from physical (explosions) to "soft" (stolen confidential data), which remain implicit until later in the book. This makes it difficult for readers to build their own list of scenarios they must plan for. Adding a chapter on vulnerability analysis would solve this problem. Although Coleman mentions the importance of decision-support tools (checklists, flowcharts) and of support, the book has no Web page that links to key traditional and new social media, including discussion forums and groups of communication colleagues, nor links to important tools such as sample plans, downloadable templates, and software links (reputation monitors).

Criticisms notwithstanding, *Crisis Communication Strategies* is a great introductory textbook, and even non-crisis communicators will learn much from this book.

Geoff Hart

Geoff Hart is an STC Fellow with more than 35 years of writing, editing, and translation experience. He's the author of two popular books, *Effective Onscreen Editing and Write Faster With Your Word Processor.*

Interfaces and Us: User Experience Design and the Making of the Computable Subject

Zachary Kaiser. 2023. Bloomsbury Visual Arts. [ISBN 978-1-3502-4524-2. 224 pages, including index. US$29.95 (softcover).]

In *Interfaces and Us: User Experience Design and the Making of the Computable Subject*, Zachary Kaiser draws the dotted line from the established frameworks of physical design assets, like posters, to define what he calls "computable subjectivity" as it relates to user experience design (UXD) to create interfaces. These interfaces are part of the slow, methodical conversion of people into information processors to be classified only as the data they provide as computable subjects. After the foundational research tying the book's concepts to Foucault's theories of "biopolitics" and "biopower" that shape algorithmic classification powering predictive technology, Kaiser informs readers this makes it possible for UXD to infer and create restrictions that "guide" user interaction with every interface.

After Kaiser shares the main underpinnings and recognized influences for his findings, he walks through the impact of people being reduced to the information processes that can be derived from knowing nuanced and nano-specific data points about their behavior. He explores the moral, emotional, and resulting political probabilities from normalizing the reduction of people to computational subjects that he believes will lead to UXD being used to create future behaviors. Technological advances like the inclusion and normalization of statistical analysis for optimization as far back as 1940 are referenced to show readers how long corporations have planned to introduce and normalize cybernetics, so that the data derived from people would create people's reality.

A case is made about the negative consequences of "Neoliberal Healthcare" executed through wearable technology like the Amazon Halo. Kaiser argues this technology and the response to the ability to optimize oneself will lead to negative consequences like anxiety because of the moral dilemma people will feel for "not optimizing" one's health. He also states this will lead to superfluous (a crasser word was used) jobs, superfluous people, and moral degradation for those who "buy-in" to the datafication of their health.

If viewing human computer interaction through the lens provided by Kaiser, contributors to data driven products—including those tasked with UXD—will create a damaging future where every interface becomes an instrument of control disguised as a tool for interaction. Each person contributing to the creation of interactive products is playing a part in supporting an economic outcome like what led to "Chile Socialist Cybernetics" that were lauded as helpful but responsible for more harm than good. Kaiser proposes instead of aiding well-meaning or ill-informed corporations that further the "propagation of computable subjectivity" UX designers should engage in "Luddite" (UX) Design Education that should be taught as a form of resistance that will slow down or stop the ability to produce "the fictions that begin in the minds of tech company CEOs and founders" (p. 136).

Shawneda Crout

Shawneda Crout works as a technical project manager and an author. When she isn't working on a project, solve, system, or process, you'll find her working on her next book. Learn more at shawneda.com.

Composing Health Literacies: Perspectives and Resources for Undergraduate Writing Instruction

Michael J. Madson, ed. Routledge. [ISBN 978-1-03-229926-6. 236 pages, including index. US$44.95 (softcover).]

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the public's lack of health literacy worldwide, and governments and universities are taking notice. Poor health literacy is associated with higher rates of hospitalization and premature death as well as "risky behaviors, ill health, and mismanagement of chronic diseases such as cancer, diabetes, HIV/AIDS,

and asthma" (p. 1). The question is, who should teach students health literacy and how should we teach it? *Composing Health Literacies: Perspectives and Resources for Undergraduate Writing Instruction*, edited by Michael J. Madson, seeks to answer those pressing questions by suggesting ways in which higher education might place health literacy instruction in undergraduate writing instruction (UWIs) programs.

Composing Health Literacies is divided into three main parts, each addressing a different component of teaching health literacy in a UWI context. Part 1 addresses assignments and courses, Part 2 profiles programs that have successfully integrated health literacy instruction into their UWI programs, and Part 3 discusses rhetorical and contextual studies that may further illustrate how health literacy can be woven into a UWI curriculum.

Madison's edited collection is valuable because it approaches the subject from many different perspectives. Although all the contributors, except one, are employed at universities within the United States, the authors look at UWI and health literacies from a variety of perspectives, ranging from medical programs to English and rhetoric programs, to public health programs. Exploring these varying perspectives is valuable for technical writing instructors housed in English and other non-medical departments at universities because it lets us survey ways in which medical professionals integrate their subject matter into their undergraduate writing courses.

According to Madson, the audience for *Composing Health Literacies* includes instructors of health career-focused undergraduate education as well as other instructors involved with undergraduate writing unrelated to medicine who wish to include health literacy topics within their classroom (pp. 8-9). As a Professor of English who teaches medical rhetoric along with technical writing, I could envision including some of these assignments and health literacy topics in my courses. The inclusion of these topics into first-year composition courses may be a harder sell, however, as many of these programs have greater limitations on the topics and genres they can teach. Further, the political climate of some areas within the United States may make addressing health literacy in writing classrooms risky for instructors.

Despite some of the limitations of the text, *Composing Health Literacies* would be a useful addition
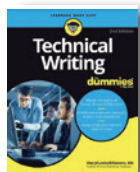
for the library of any instructor of undergraduate writing. This text presents a fresh take on writing instruction for technical writing instructors who have some flexibility within their curriculums.

Nicole St. Germaine

Nicole St. Germaine is a Professor of English and the Coordinator of the Technical and Business Writing Program at the Natalie Z. Ryan Department of English at Angelo State University.

Technical Writing for Dummies

Sheryl Lindsell-Roberts. 2023. 2nd ed. Wiley Publishing, Inc. [ISBN 978-1-394-17675-5. 384 pages, including index. US$29.99 (softcover).]

If you have seen any of the *For Dummies* books, then you should know what to expect from this one. They all follow a tried-and-true template and are aimed at new learners, people who are curious about a subject, but who feel a little stupid in the face of what they don't know. They serve this audience well. The writing is chipper and reassuring, and they do a good job of quickly familiarizing the reader with the essential elements of their subject.

While basic in its coverage, even experienced technical writers may want to have a look at the second edition of *Technical Writing for Dummies.* Technical communication is a broad, complex, and quickly evolving field. No matter how experienced you are, there are areas you have not experienced but should know about. Much has changed since this book's first edition appeared 20 years ago, and it does its best to cover emerging technologies and methods of working.

Those interested in breaking in will appreciate the book's summary of the skills and qualities you need to succeed, and its advice on creating portfolios, a LinkedIn profile, and so on.

Throughout the advice is good, if basic. It emphasizes the importance of planning and offers a useful model template for a technical writing brief, a variety of documentation plan in which you gather and record information about document type, presentation context, audience profile, schedule, resources, team, and so on. You can download a ready-to-be-filled-in version of the writing brief from the *Dummies* website.

Sheryl Lindsell-Roberts covers the subject's basics—focus on user needs, strive for clarity and consistency, use the active voice, chunk information, follow conventions for handling types of lists, and so on. Her book also offers basic advice for producing a variety of frequently written documents—user manuals, abstracts, specification sheets, and executive summaries.

Technical communication often requires research, so the book covers designing questionnaires and surveys, and the ins and outs of finding answers online.

Not all technical communication results in a written document, so Lindsell-Roberts covers topics such as giving presentations, and such new technologies as e-learning and gamification.

Turning to the working environment, the book discusses working collaboratively, building trust, giving constructive feedback, team etiquette, and tools, such as those used for videoconferencing.

Technical Writing for Dummies rounds things out with a host of ancillary subjects including protecting intellectual property, advice for writing white papers, and publishing in professional journals.

No profession is without its downsides, so Lindsell-Roberts wraps up her book with common frustrations you may encounter—work overload and time pressure, problems with subject matter experts, poorly defined and managed projects, and others.

A series of appendices reviews punctuations and grammar and defines common abbreviations and technical terms.
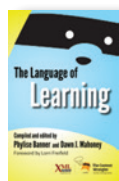
While it will not replace experience or formal training, if you are curious about the technical writing profession, need a good overview of the challenges you might face, and wonder whether you might be a good fit, *Technical Writing for Dummies* will serve.

Patrick Lufkin

Patrick Lufkin is an STC Fellow with experience in computer documentation, newsletter production, and public relations. He reads widely in science, history, and current affairs, as well as on writing and editing. He chairs the Gordon Scholarship for technical communication and co-chairs the Northern California technical communication competition.

The Language of Learning

Phylise Banner and Dawn J. Mahoney, eds. 2023. XML Press. [ISBN-978-1-937434-84-7. 166 pages, including index. US$25.95 (softcover).]

The Language of Learning is a handy reference book compiled by Phylise Banner and Dawn J. Mahoney providing 52 words and phrases used in the learning industry from 52 instructional design and learning practitioners. Many of the authors may be familiar to the readers as they have been participants in various STC activities.

The structure of *The Language of Learning* reminds me of a set of building blocks. There are five main sections: Design, Strategy, Implementation, Evaluation, and Innovation. By grouping related words and phrases this way, a flow builds from one term to the next. Each author's definition answers the same set of questions: What is it? Why is it important? Why does a business professional need to know this?

There is care and thought behind this, where the divisions, the questions, and the discussions build on one another. This is not a dry presentation of definitions, but a fuller discussion that may spark additional research. Information is presented conversationally, enabling readers to link what they already know to what they are learning. The explanations are accessible, in plain language and immediately useful. The definition shows how a word or phrase is related to creating effective learning programs. Additional resources include a glossary of additional terms, a references section, a contributor index, and a subject index.

I found the References section facilitated an impulse to dive more deeply into a particular topic by using the links to the source material. *The Language of Learning* is a book that will spark a desire to learn more about a word or phrase but will provide sufficient information to understand the word or phrase. It may not be a book to just sit down and read cover to cover, but it is a delight to assess one's understanding of a word or phrase. Checking a definition can morph into an invitation to explore further through the business professional section and the wealth of references. Each definition includes a short professional biography of the author and their contact information.

Who can benefit by adding *The Language of Learning* their resources shelf? Everyone engaged in constructing any kind of learning communication. Students may find it easier to find a quick answer here than in a textbook. It will be especially useful to those technical communicators who have decided to transition into instructional design, as well as those technical communicators whose job duties have been expanded to include providing instructional design content.

Marcia Shannon

Marcia Shannon, CPTC, is an STC member in the Carolina Chapter and IDL SIG. With more than 30 years in IT, finance, and insurance, Marcia has written procedures and job aids, trained co-workers and customers, and provided user support. Although retired, she is looking for more adventures in technical communications.

Talking on Eggshells: Soft Skills for Hard Conversations

Sam Horn. 2023. New World Library. [ISBN 978-1-60868-849-4. 348 pages, including index. USD$19.95 (softcover).]

Improving communications in an organization, office, school, or home would for sure be an admirable goal, and *Talking on Eggshells: Soft Skills for Hard Conversations* makes an admirable attempt to help people achieve this goal. Anyone trying to improve communications in any setting will benefit from reading Sam Horn's book. This can include in a situation, for example, where you have communication issues anywhere from a toxic work environment to a school or family issue.

Horn's background is indeed impressive as she tackles a wide array of topics as someone ignoring rules or boundaries (p. 197), someone being manipulative (p. 255), and "someone is making my life miserable" (p. 184).

The author tackles the topic of dealing with a bully providing in part the following advice besides recommending that you document an incident (p. 283).

Words to Lose	Words to Use
Avoid and ignore *"I'm just going to lie low and hope he doesn't turn on me."*	Act with agency *"If he starts in on me, I will interrupt him instead of suffering in silence."*
Bystander *"He really tore into Bev today and made her cry."*	Upstander *"I documented what happened in this and other meetings and will report this."*

If a co-worker overslept and missed an important presentation you had to consequently make alone, consider the following (p. 94) as explained by Horn.

Words to Lose	Words to Use
Should *"You should have arranged for a wake-up call."*	Suggest *"At our next pitch fest, let's call each other to make sure we are awake."*

Horn's advice makes me think she is like a friend who is also a professional who can provide some most welcome, useful advice. This can be especially helpful to someone who tends, as I do, to avoid confrontations when it would do me better to address an issue and solve a problem ideally as Horn shows with kindness.

Jeanette Evans

Jeanette Evans is an STC Associate Fellow; active in the Ohio STC community, currently serving on the newsletter committee; and co-author of an *Intercom* column on emerging technologies in education. She holds an MS in technical communication management from Mercer University and undergraduate degree in education.

Language, Society and Power: An Introduction

Annabelle Mooney and Betsy Evans. 2023. 6th ed. Routledge. [ISBN 978-0-367-63844-3. 286 pages, including index. US$38.95 (softcover)].

Language, Society and Power: *An Introduction* provides a critical examination of sociolinguistics with contemporary topics and examples. The book is clearly a textbook, so readers should be aware of the deep dive that each chapter takes into linguistic matters. Teachers in disciplines other than linguistics, such as technical and professional writing, might find the text relevant in a variety of classes because of the comprehensive coverage on complex and critical issues regarding language and language use.

Ten of the eleven chapters take readers from the basics of linguistics, such as discussing what language is and what it represents, to more timely subjects of language and politics, media, gender, ethnicity, and age. There are also chapters on linguistic landscapes, how language is linked to class and symbolic capital, and global Englishes.

The chapters are consistent and well organized. They begin with an introduction and thorough definition of the chapter's subject (what is gender, for instance), and then moves on to more complicated issues related to the subject, with technical words bolded and well defined. There are activity boxes in each chapter, which I considered to be one of the strong points of this book because the activities are usually on modern issues or perspectives and challenge readers to use chapter material and think critically. They would serve well as starters for class discussions. For instance, in "Language and Ethnicity," readers are asked to define their own ethnicity and distinguish between their ethnicity and that of other people, meaning they must engage in thinking about the characteristics they use to define themselves and compare them to the characteristics they use to define others. This activity is a precursor to further coverage on racism, reclaiming terms, language variation, and ethnicity and identity, all material that people see and hear about in mainstream news and present-day social conversations.

Another strength of the book is the presentation of critical perspectives on each subject. Readers are presented with several perspectives or theories on a subject, and Annabelle Mooney and Betsy Evans critically examine each one for issues of equality, equity, inclusion, and humane, respectful treatment for everyone. They clearly show the connection between language and how it can be used to create uneven power that benefits some and marginalizes others, and how simple modifications could reposition that power and create a balance. For example, in "Language and Gender," discussion on marked and unmarked terms show how marked terms, such as women's titles (Miss, Mrs., and Ms.) always reveal information about her that the unmarked term, Mr., does not reveal about men. Or how the 'cis' in cisgender is one way to unmark the presently marked term transgender. And the last chapter, "Projects," is incredibly helpful for greater engagement through project descriptions that promote engagement and critical thinking for each chapter.
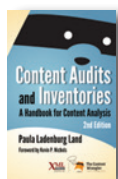
Language, Society and Power addresses incredibly important and timely issues regarding the influence of language in a world that is struggling to understand how language functions in society.

Diane Martinez

Diane Martinez is an STC member and an associate professor of English at Western Carolina University where she teaches technical and professional writing. She previously worked as a technical writer in engineering, an online writing instructor, and an online writing center specialist.

Content Audits and Inventories: A Handbook for Content Analysis

Paula Ladenburg Land. 2023. 2nd ed. XML Press. [ISBN 978-1-937434-82-3. 252 pages, including index. USD$29.95 (softcover).]

Paula Ladenburg Land begins her book with the sentence: "Audits are all around us" (p. xiii). In the second edition of *Content Audits and Inventories: A Handbook for Content Analysis*, created in the wake of new developments in technical communication—such as UX writing, the increasing prevalence of structured authoring, and new software tools that can supposedly assess content for you—Land reaffirms the importance of content auditing as a method for evaluating content against business and user goals. She reminds us that, "Content inventories and audits provide a valuable window into the current state of your organization's content" (p. 27).

Land is also careful to distinguish between a content *inventory* and a content *audit,* a common confusion among professionals who are new to content strategy. A content inventory is the process of "creating an organized listing of content assets" (p. xvi), whereas a content audit is a "qualitative evaluation of content against a set of defined criteria" (p. xvii). A content inventory gives you the foundation for assessing content, but you must go further and rigorously assess content through a full audit if you want to determine "whether the content supports business and user goals" (p. xviii).

The main bulk of *Content Audits and Inventories* is devoted to the process of conducting a content audit, with accessible section titles such as "Planning Your Audit Project" (p. 1), "Building the Audit" (p. 37), and "Conducting the Audit" (p. 97). Each chapter within these sections is grounded in examples of actual practices, such as in Chapter 8: Selecting and Defining Audit Criteria where Land presents a sample rubric for auditing content for audience sensitivity and usability/

readability (p. 73). The chapters are short, to-the-point breakdowns of each content auditing step, which is admittedly a complex process.

Sprinkled throughout the book are also helpful callout sections such as "What if I Missed a Criterion" that attempt to troubleshoot common issues with auditing (p. 62). In addition, a series of appendices provide a wealth of resources for auditing, including Appendix A: Sample Content Inventory (p. 190), Appendix B: Stakeholder Interview Template (p. 191), and Appendix C: Content Audit Checklist (p. 195). In a relatively compact volume, there is little this reviewer, himself a content auditing expert, can imagine adding. *Content Audits and Inventories* quite simply provides everything one needs to know to conduct effective, efficient content audits.

And anyone who has delved deeply into content strategy readings can immediately grasp the value of such a book. There is no more complete source on content auditing anywhere in existence. Every book on content strategy mentions the broad strokes of content auditing and its importance, but none have devoted more than a chapter to explaining how to perform an audit. Readers will find within the pages of *Content Audits and Inventories* not only important considerations for understanding the goals and methods of content auditing, but also practical, hands-on advice for performing them.

Guiseppe Getto

Guiseppe Getto is a faculty member at Mercer University. He is also Director of Mercer's M.S. in Technical Communication Management.

How to Talk Language Science with Everybody

Laura Wagner and Cecile McKee. 2023. Cambridge University Press. [ISBN 978-1-108-79492-3. 268 pages, including index. US$34.99 (softcover).]

Language is full of amazing phenomena, and language scientists can lead others to "Aha!" moments by revealing little-considered aspects of the language people use every day. The question is "How?" The answer: "doable demos," self-contained language-science activities to use in informal settings like festivals, libraries, and museums—places where people go to have fun and learn. In *How to Talk Language Science with Everybody,* Laura Wagner and

Cecile McKee provide a step-by-step plan to develop your own doable demo.

The authors caution readers to ditch the school mindset. In free-choice settings, no one is required to attend, or even pay attention. It's up to you to generate excitement and hold people's interest. The adage "Get 'em in the booth" applies, and the authors suggest pitches to attract passersby, like "Do you want to trick your brain?" or "Get your free spectrogram here!"

Wagner and McKee do a stellar job of putting the "everybody" in *How to Talk Language Science with Everybody,* describing scaffolding techniques to reach an audience with wide-ranging experiences and ages, from toddlers to adolescents to adults. The activities described take advantage of natural curiosity and are "doable" with few outside resources. Attention-getting giveaways like a spectrogram printout (p. 85), a headband with a picture of a brain (p. 47), and name tags written in the international phonetic alphabet (p. 134) add to the enjoyment.

This how-to guidebook is geared specifically to language scientists—linguists, psychologists, speech pathologists, audiologists, computer scientists, anthropologists, and the like—but the core lessons apply to any science communication. The book contains 20 well-organized chapters that emphasize different components of "how to talk language science," with engagement techniques based on Paul Grice's Conversational Maxims and adherence to the known-new contract, that is, finding common ground with your audience before imparting new information.

Every chapter has an Opening and Closing Worksheet with guiding questions to help you produce a doable demo. However, I found the worksheets less helpful than other regular chapter components, especially the Worked Example Box, which gets into the nitty-gritty of sample demos in many subdisciplines of linguistics, and the informative Further Reading section.

The authors promise practical advice and certainly deliver, with specifics that make the book shine. Wagner and McKee offer tips for finding and working in various venues. They cover must-know considerations that many learn only by trial-and-error, such as bringing a tablecloth to store equipment out of sight; labeling cords, boxes, and electronics; and having extras like tape, markers, pens, chargers, etc. The list is extensive.

The authors' tone is open and friendly but not cloying. One of the goals of the doable demo is to

show that science learning can be fun and can happen anywhere. Communicating language science is ripe for "Aha!" moments, and *How to Talk Language Science with Everybody* helps you to help others have their own "Aha!" moment.

Bonnie Denmark
Bonnie Denmark is an STC Member and Coordinator of the Business and Technical Writing Option at Western Connecticut State University. She was previously a software developer, focusing on natural language applications and human factors.

Better Presentations: How to Present Like a Pro (Virtually or in Person)

Jacqueline Farrington. 2022. Ideapress Publishing. [ISBN 978-1-64687-046-2. 198 pages, including index. US$19.95 (softcover).]

Better Presentations: How to Present Like a Pro (Virtually or in Person) is part of the "Non-Obvious Guides" series which "focus on sharing advice that you haven't heard before" (Publisher's Note page). However, while readers with presentation experience will likely gain a few new techniques they will already be acquainted with much of the book's content.

This is not a critique of Jacqueline Farrington's experience and expertise regarding the topic. Farrington draws upon her acting and former Yale Drama School faculty member experience "…to help clients create **presentational performances** that are more dynamic, engaging, *human,* and authentic" (p. iii). Her advice also covers virtual presentations, which have become a common presentation format.

Better Presentations is intended to be a guide. It is written succinctly with practical tips and brief "Story" sections that clarify the topics with Farrington's personal experiences and anecdotes from sports, acting, and other fields. The book's format, with bulleted lists and appropriate use of color and formatting making section topics and key points easily identifiable and facilitates its use as a guidebook.

Farrington mentions that the guidebook provides an online resources component for more in-depth information to the topics she introduces and directs readers to the online appropriate resources throughout the book. For example, in Chapter 5, "Voice", the book

instructs readers to "Visit Online Resources for: A listening guide to audit and improve your voice" (p. 62).

Unfortunately, when I tried to access the online resources component (www.nonobvious.com/guides/betterpresentations), it was not available at the time of the review. I looked forward to reviewing these resources as I was interested in learning more about the topics that Farrington introduced in the book. I found the "Coming Soon!" explanation on the website disappointing as a reviewer and a disservice to readers who purchase the book. Readers should have access to the entire content.
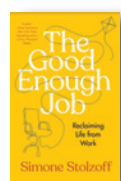
Because the online component is an integral part of *Better Presentations*, I cannot recommend this book as I was unable to review the entire guidebook.

Ann Marie Queeney

Ann Marie Queeney is an STC senior member with more than 20 years' technical communication experience primarily in the medical device industry. Her STC experience includes serving as a Special Interest Group leader, 2020-2022 Board member, and CAC (Communities Affairs Committee) Chair. Ann Marie is the owner of A.M. Queeney, LLC.

The Good Enough Job: Reclaiming Life from Work

Simone Stolzoff. 2023. Penguin Random House. [ISBN 978-0-593-53896-8. 240 pages, including notes. US$28.00 (hardcover).]

Simone Stolzoff examines the culture of workism in *The Good Enough Job: Reclaiming Like from Work*. Through stories of workers, Stolzoff examines common myths such as "this company is like a family" and "do what you love and never work a day in your life" (p. xxiv) According to Stolzoff, these stories "live in the tension between seeing work as a means to an end and seeing work as the end itself" (pp. xxiv–xxv).

As I read this book, I found it incredibly easy to relate to each person in these stories. They are driven, ambitious, and passionate but also burned out, disenchanted, and exhausted. And, just like me, their identity and their work were linked. Take Divya Singh, for example, who spent seven years nurturing the idea of a dairy-free product line into the successful company, Prameer. When she finally left, she said there was a "gaping hole in [her] identity" (p. 9).

The highlight of these stories, though, is that each person developed a strong sense of who they were when they weren't working, which resulted in a healthier relationship to their work. For Divya, she says, "I know my price…Because I developed my identity outside of work, there's a cost that if work cuts into it—if it ever costs me a larger part of my identity and my life—I know it's not worth it" (p. 18).

For many of us who live in a culture of workism, it's not easy to develop a sense of self that is separate from our work. We wrestle with it "every time we decide whether to spend an extra hour at the office or to check our email on a Sunday" (p. xxv). The boundary between work and life is so easily blurred if we let it. Stolzoff even shares his own struggles: "The truth is, I'm embarrassed by how my sense of self-worth is tethered to my productivity. Despite writing a book about right-sizing work's place in our lives, I'd be lying if I told you I'd found an easy way to do so myself" (pp. 179–180).

While Stolzoff doesn't provide any quick fixes to separate your self-worth from your work, he does share the experiences of those who have struggled to develop healthier relationships with work. Their stories prompt readers—like me—to examine their own relationship to work. I highly recommend *The Good Enough Job* to people who live and work in a work-centric society.

Sara Buchanan

Sara Buchanan works at London Computer Systems, a property management software company, in Cincinnati, OH. In her free time, she's an avid reader, enjoys cooking, and doting on her cats: Buffy and Spike.

The Long Journey of English: A Geographical History of the Language

Peter Trudgill. 2023. Cambridge University Press. [ISBN 978-1-108-94957-6. 192 pages, including index. US$24.99 (softcover).]

Linguists typically study language genealogically, by showing how one language descends from a previous one. Genealogy, however, is also geography: linguistic relationships, and therefore genealogical linkages, are determined by languages "travelling from one place to another" (p. 1). The history of English is a record of its 5000-year journey "chronologically and spatially…from the heart

of the Eurasian landmass…to the furthest ends of the earth" (p. 1).

The journey to modern English begins in Central Asia around 4000 BC when the Indo-European language "underwent geographical expansion" that resulted in different dialects and "eventually, different languages, of which Germanic was one" (p. 4). As Germanic spread into southern Scandinavia, Northern Germany, and the North Sea Coast, it split into early versions of German, Dutch, Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, Icelandic, Frisian, and English—each language distinguished linguistically through geographical difference.

The Germanic geographic movement collided with the Proto-Celtic languages then dominant in Europe, beginning the "3000-year long retreat by Celtic" (p. 18). The diminution of Celtic was accelerated by the rise of Anglo-Saxon in Britain around AD 450. Hired as mercenaries by Romanized Britons, the Anglo-Saxons eventually revolted, gaining "control of most of England" and achieving "gradual domination" of the Celts (p. 37), who were driven to the periphery of Britain, with only Welsh, Cornish, Cumbric, and Gaelic enclaves remaining. Speakers of Breton fled to northern France (the future Normandy), so that by AD 600 Welsh, Cornish, and Breton had essentially been replaced by Anglo-Saxon. By AD 900, the displacement of Britons by Anglo-Saxons was such that they "gave their name to the whole of England—as well as the language" (p. 46).

The largest expansion of English, however, occurred with overseas colonization, especially in North America, as the English took lands "from native peoples" and earlier settlers like the French. Three factors enabled the expansion: English speakers arriving in America; extermination or expulsion of indigenous people; and "*language shift*" or gradual absorption of English by native populations (p. 76–77). The acquisition of French lands after the French and Indian War in 1763, the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, the defeat of Mexico by Texas, and California statehood accelerated the spread of English throughout the United States and Canada. The rise of Indian Boarding Schools similarly compelled indigenous children to speak English and adopt European culture.

Within a hundred years, English had expanded from the "eastern seaboard of North America" (p. 114) to areas as remote as Australia and New Zealand, where imposition of English destroyed "aboriginal cultures

and languages" (p.127); and India, where English became an official lingua franca or "second language" (p. 164) enabling common governance of different linguistic minorities.

Will English remain the world's dominant language? As Peter Trudgill shows, any language can decompose into different dialects and languages. Modern English is no different. Only time and geographical change will tell.

Donald R. Riccomini

Donald R. Riccomini is an STC member and Emeritus Senior Lecturer in English at Santa Clara University, where he specialized in engineering and technical communications. He previously spent twenty-three years in high technology as a technical writer, engineer, and manager in semiconductors, instrumentation, and server development.

Design for a Better World: Meaningful, Sustainable, Humanity Centered

Can design create a better world? What is the role of the designer in creating this better future? Is success even possible, or is it already too late? Don Norman explores the answers to these questions in his latest book, *Design for a Better World: Meaningful, Sustainable, Humanity Centered*. He argues that design is at the center of the climate crisis, and that just about everything that exists in the world today is designed. In his arguments about design's role in creating the climate crisis, Norman reminds us that Victor Papanek, a very influential, controversial designer and design critic, once said, "There are professions more harmful than design, but only a very few of them" (p. 21). *Design for a Better World* considers designs' role in causing, as well as solving, the climate crisis.

This book presents and argues for a humanity-centered approach to design, rather than human-centered design. Human-centered design has been the battle cry for several decades in design. Norman argues that human-centered design tends to focus on individual needs, and to solve the climate crisis, or at least to reduce the symptoms, we need to focus our efforts on more than just individual needs. Instead,

a humanity-centered approach to design considers humanity as a whole, it addresses the entire ecosystem, and the environment as well as all living creatures.

Throughout the book, the tone is balanced on the edge of a knife, wavering between somewhere just on the verge of alarmist, to hopeful for a better future. However, it never crosses over into full-on alarmism, likely because Norman understands that if he goes that route, he will lose most of his readers, who will give up because they will perceive that the situation is already hopeless. Thankfully, this is not the story he presents. *Design for a Better World* contains many ideas for design reform, education reform, and business reform, but Norman argues that small steps are more manageable in the form of modular. Additionally, there is no one-size-fits-all solution, and instead he argues that a modular approach is the key. Design is at the heart of the solutions Norman presents, but he also argues that designers can't solve these problems alone, and the designers need to work with stakeholders in addressing problems at a modular level.

Don Norman is a designer, researcher, and engineer specializing not only in design but also in psychology. Like his other books, the writing in *Design for a Better World* is very accessible and largely targeted at practicing designers. Anyone interested in design and climate change reform would learn much from this book. Norman's book should be required reading for everyone because, as he reminds us, "Everyone is a designer" (p. 188).

Amanda Horton
Amanda Horton holds an MFA in Design and teaches graduate and undergraduate courses at the University of Central Oklahoma (UCO) in design history, theory, and criticism. She is also the director of the Design History Minor at UCO.

Design for Learning: User Experience in Online Teaching and Learning

Jenae Cohn and Michael Greer. 2023. Rosenfeld Media. [ISBN 978-1-959029-16-8. 198 pages, including index. US$49.99 (softcover).]

Those of us who teach or train online and are interested in user experience (UX) design and instructional design have been waiting for a book like *Design for Learning: User Experience in Online*

Teaching and Learning for many years. As Jenae Cohn and Michael Greer claim in their opening chapter, "Learners are not sponges who absorb information through osmosis. But many learning platforms are unconsciously based on a model that defines learning as *information transfer*" (p. 8). In place of this paradigm, they suggest a move toward learning experience design, a blend of UX and instructional design that "defines learning as an active and interactive process" (p. 9). Rather than focusing on the "content" of learning, the learning experience designer model "encourages designers to focus on what the learners are doing—or how they are using the content and why" (p. 10).

The rest of the book proceeds to lay out how to design learning spaces that are interactive and assume an active learner. This includes processes such as Learning about Your Learners (Chapter 2), Setting the Foundation (Chapter 3), and Building a Space for Online Learning (Chapter 4). The book also includes chapters that focus on particular modes of learning, such as Producing Videos (Chapter 7), and Facilitating Live Webinar Presentations (Chapter 8). Finally, the book describes how to increase interaction in online learning with chapters like Building Connections Among Learners (Chapter 9), Giving Your Learners Feedback (Chapter 10), and Reviewing Your Learning Experience (Chapter 11).

Each chapter contains several recommended activities, such as on page 40 of Chapter 3 when the authors describe how to build a learning map, or a "plan for designing and building your learning experience." It gives specific examples for such activities, such as an example learning map on pages 41-2–42 from a class on how to meditate. Rosenfeld Media books are known for their accessible, down-to-earth language that make them great introductions for people who are new to a discipline; this book is now different.

As someone with significant experience in UX, instructional design, and teaching online, however, this reviewer found very valuable information in *Design for Learning* as well. Though I have not personally created a learning map for courses and trainings I've done, I've engaged in similar activities and the ability to name this course planning process and link it to best practices in design is significant. As an academic, I'm most excited to use this book

for teaching purposes. However, as many current students in technical communication who are interested in UX may struggle to see its relevance to instructional design, where the ADDIE model is arguably the dominant paradigm.

Though I can't speak for an entire field, *Design for Learning* seems to be an important bridge between instructional designers who view the ADDIE model as the best practice and UX designers who see the UX process as the best practice. The book connects UX and instructional design in simple, relatable terms that both newcomers and seasoned professionals will find useful.

Guiseppe Getto

Guiseppe Getto is a faculty member at Mercer University. He is also Director of Mercer's M.S. in Technical Communication Management.

AI and Writing

Sidney I. Dobrin. Broadview Press. [ISBN 978-1-55481-651-4. 128 pages, including index. US$19.95 (softcover).]

AI and Writing by Sidney Dobrin helps students and instructors understand how Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) works and how it can be incorporated into formal writing instruction.

Dobrin looks at GenAI from two perspectives: the conceptual and the applied. Conceptual AI addresses how artificial intelligence (AI) might impact societies, economies, and cultures and how we teach and learn writing. It also contends with ethical issues for AI use and the way in which AI technologies are developed. Applied AI deals with how to use AI responsibly, which means understanding the what ifs and whys of AI.

The author doesn't explain how to use specific platforms, but he does offer practical instruction on using GenAI platforms for writing tasks, whether they be academic, professional, or personal. Each chapter ends with "so what?" questions and scenarios for conceptual and applied AI.

For example, in Chapter 3, Integrity, learning objectives include describing ways in which GenAI and plagiarism are connected. A question at the end of the chapter is, "So what if you use GenAI without citation? What would be the likely outcome—in terms of academic and social integrity and student learning—if we had no restrictions on these practices?" (p. 42).

One of the conceptual considerations at the end of this chapter asks, "In what ways might GenAI exacerbate student cheating [assuming that students tend to cheat when they have little interest]? Are there any ways in which it might actually discourage cheating?" (p. 42).

Finally, considerations for applied AI include asking GenAI to define plagiarism and whether using GenAI is a violation of academic integrity.

If you're interested in evaluating the role of GenAI as a writing tool (for better or for worse), *AI and Writing* presents a plethora of conceptual and applied AI questions, along with discussion questions, that will have you considering its use from every angle. You'll learn about:

- Identifying hallucinations (outputs that are false but appear correct)
- Showing your work (your writing process)
- Using GenAI for research, drafting, and revising
- Writing and refining prompts
- Creating images from words
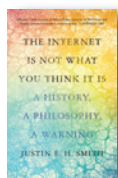- Developing and applying GenAI skills

This is a good read for contemplating the future of writing, especially as it applies to teaching people how to write academically and in their career of choice. Answering the questions at the end of each chapter would be time well spent for considering the ramifications of this technology.

Michelle Gardner

Michelle Gardner is a copywriter and content editor in the life sciences industry and the technology sector. She has a bachelor's degree in journalism: Public Relations from California State University, Long Beach, and a master's degree in computer resources and information management from Webster University.

The Internet Is Not What You Think It Is: A History, a Philosophy, a Warning

Justin E.H. Smith. 2022. Princeton University Press. [ISBN 978-0-691-21232-6. 208 pages, including index. US$27.95 (softcover).]

In *The Internet Is Not What You Think It Is: A History, a Philosophy, a Warning*, Justin E.H Smith presents the myriad challenges and changes inherent in this age of social-mediated lives and shortened attention spans. He quickly moves towards a discussion of how the ideas that surround various human endeavors have woven together in imaginative leaps and metaphorical connections to lead to the creation of the internet and the ways of being it entails. He argues that the internet is not an aberration of history—it is instead an extension of our human "*excrescence*" that runs through a history of philosophers, scientists, and (sometimes) con men (p. 52). This book is not a quick summation of what the internet is—it is instead a readable, but challenging, work of philosophy and history that will likely upend the context in which the reader considers the internet and its place in history and the natural world.

The book contains five chapters. The first, "A Sudden Acceleration," provides an incisive critique of what it means to exist in this moment of rapid change at the hands of social media and the internet in general. The second, "The Ecology of the Internet," draws a connection between means of communication that exist in nature, such as the clicking of whales that can be heard by another whale across the globe and the attempts and triumphs of human telecommunications—from the bizarre and fantastic, such as a system of transatlantic communication involving snails, to the telegraph and the "screens and cables and signals in the ether" of the internet (p. 84). The third, "The Reckoning Engine and the Thinking Machine," unpacks the illogical and metaphysical arguments that ground technophilic claims such as this world being a simulation and artificial intelligence (AI) truly ever being able to gain consciousness. The fourth, "'How closely woven the web': The Internet as Loom," investigates the ways in which seemingly unrelated concepts interplay with each other through metaphor to help create new meanings and, subsequently, new inventions. Finally, in the fifth, "A Window on the World," Smith presents a more personal viewpoint of how the internet serves as his window on the world

through Wikipedia and through being able to see detailed pictures of distant galaxies, even during the isolation of a global pandemic.
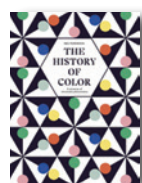
Overall, *The Internet Is Not What You Think It Is* provides a unique way of seeing the often-overwhelming advance of the internet, AI, and computers in widely different contexts than most readers likely would have otherwise considered. Technical communicators looking for quick insight into a history and philosophy of the internet will have to dig a bit to find it, and Smith's diverse approach sometimes does not feel completely justified.

Dylan Schrader

Dylan Schrader is a proposal developer at the University of Alabama in Huntsville, where he also earned MAs in English and Professional Communication.

The History of Color: A Universe of Chromatic Phenomena

Neil Parkinson. 2023. Frances Lincoln. [ISBN 978-0-7112-6679-7. 256 pages, including index. US$28.00 (hardcover).]

Throughout history, humans have grappled with the nature of color and its role in our world. Artists, philosophers, and scientists have all investigated the properties of colors and attempted to strengthen our societal understanding of how color works. Across the centuries these researchers collaborated, argued, and theorized with each other, ultimately developing the field of color studies. Now, in Neil Parkinson's *The History of Color: A universe of chromatic phenomena*, he surveys the evolution of this field from antiquity to the modern era. Along the way, Parkinson familiarizes readers with such seminal texts as Aristotle's *On Colors*, Isaac Newton's *Opticks*, and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Theory of Colours*, to name a few.

The History of Color divides the evolution of color theory into four historical periods, with each one meriting its own chapter. The early chapters, covering the classical period through the mid-19th century, are defined by the quest to understand color. In these eras, artists and scientists had little to no grasp of what color was, or how the different colors related to each other. The various theories are mostly varying degrees of ridiculous, including such ideas as color being

indicative of "cosmic power", or that color was simply a visual representation of musical notes. Gradually the foundations of color theory were developed, such as with Newton's revelation that color is formed from rays of light. In the latter chapters covering more recent history, the study of color shifts more to the domain of the artist, and accordingly "publications on the subject of color began to move from the 'how' to the 'how-to'" (p. 134). Recent developments on color have focused more on aesthetic study, and the literature reflects this.

It is fascinating to see the gradual evolution of color theory, particularly thanks to the lavish illustrations throughout the book. It seems like every theorist developed their own color wheel to explain the relations between colors, and most of these are faithfully reproduced in *The History of Color*. These graphics highlight how little we understood color, and it is satisfying to chart the evolution as primary colors and eventually the modern color spectrum is identified by scientists. Still, the book does throw out many names, theories, and book titles, and it can feel a little dry to read for long periods. Thankfully, each history chapter is broken up by short essays about the impact of color in different domains. These include such contexts as food, printing, commerce, and even language. These were my favorite sections of the book, as they really emphasized how color has impacted our world.
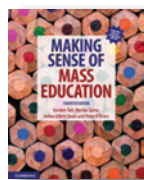
Overall, *The History of Color* is an excellent survey of the evolution of color throughout our world. The chronological chapters provide a thorough if occasionally dry narrative of how color theory evolved, and the essays highlight the impacting that this evolving knowledge had on human society.

Nathan Guzman
Nathan Guzman is a graduate student studying technical communication at the University of Alabama–Huntsville. His background is in aerospace engineering with plans of becoming a full-time editor upon graduation. Nathan is an avid reader interested in reading anything that expands his knowledge of the world and how it works.

Making Sense of Mass Education

Gordon Tait, Nerida Spina, Jenna Gillett-swan, and Peter O'Brien. 2023. 4th ed. Cambridge University Press. [ISBN 978-1-0091-0532-3. 440 pages, including index. US$86.00 (softcover).]

The fourth edition of *Making Sense of Mass Education* argues for the role of philosophy in mass education in a digital world. Gordon Tait et al. aim to explain the context of mass education with a focus on Australia through a postmodern philosophical lens: "The mass school is a site of great ethical and epistemological complexity, and philosophy can help us make sense of it in ways the other disciplines cannot" (p. 6). In this edition of the text, the authors provide updated data and research and address the rapidly changing context of technology and Australian education, which includes discussions of school funding equity.

Tait et al. systematically analyze and offer counterpoints to the modernist sociologies in an easy-to-digest format and language. The text begins with a reassessment of the modernist conceptual framework of education through a postmodern lens then moves through a discussion of governance and the cultural contexts of contemporary education. Specifically, each chapter is structured around identifying common myths about mass education to unpack and debunk them.

The authors also argue that philosophy can address some challenges that the field of education alone does not. Part 4 focuses on the role of philosophy and mass education. "Philosophy is particularly important to education.…there have been 2500 years' worth of disputes about exactly what it is and how it ought to work" (p. 295). The authors argue for the value of philosophy in understanding the larger structure of education, the value of the academic discipline of philosophy, and encourage educators to make use of the discipline in their work to better contextualize their role and to help them develop personal philosophies. Of particular interest, Chapter 9 explores the implications of data collection and the increasing "datafication" of contemporary mass education. Chapter 12 addresses the role of technology in education and questions if digital technology is the answer to challenges facing the education system.

Making Sense of Mass Education achieved its goal of a clear, inclusive, and accessible language. It effectively summarizes complex philosophical arguments and movements, educational law, and unpacks the role of class, sex, and race in Australian education over time. While the authors offer thoughts on alternative education and potential changes to the mass education system, they do not offer a definitive solution for these challenges in their statement, "Understanding those theories, and what they say about mass schooling, isn't really a quest for the 'right' answer" (p. 401). This book is not for you if you are an educator looking for the "right" answers or an academic seeking to learn more about the history of education. However, anyone interested in the context of the philosophy and structure of education in a postmodern, digital world will find a clear, accessible discussion of the value of philosophy in understanding mass education.

Amy Mandt

Amy Mandt is an STC student member. She is the Pre-Health Program Manager at the University of Alabama in Huntsville and an MA student of technical writing. Amy previously earned her M.Ed. and taught English with more than ten years of STEM education experience.

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Sean C. Herring, Editor

The following articles on technical communication have appeared recently in other journals. The abstracts are prepared by volunteer journal monitors. If you would like to contribute, contact Sean Herring at SeanHerring@ MissouriState.edu.

"Recent & Relevant" does not supply copies of cited articles. However, most publishers supply reprints, tear sheets, or copies at nominal cost. Lists of publishers' addresses, covering nearly all the articles we have cited, appear in *Ulrich's international periodicals directory*.

Audience analysis

We do everything: The broad, evolving, varied, and tentative corporate communication field

Fyke, J.P., Schmisseur, A., Webb, N.G., Vaughn, M., & Davis, J. (September 2022). *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly, 85* (3), 279-297. https://doi.org/10.1177/23294906221109192

 "Through the reflections of professionals occupying a variety of corporate communication roles, our aim was to understand what the corporate communication profession looks like in the current marketplace and the career pathways professionals take. We find that roles and functions are "broad and blurred" and "evolving and escalating," while pathways and job titles are "varied and vacillating" and "tentative and time bound." Our article offers theoretical and practical implications for industry and academic professionals looking to bridge the gap between the classroom and the marketplace. We end with pedagogical and curricular implications for corporate communication educators."

Diana Fox Bentele

Collaboration

Digital documenting practices: Collaborative writing in workplace training

Nissi, R. & Lehtinen, E. (October 2022). *Written Communication, 39* (4), 564-599 https://doi.org/10.1177/07410883221108162

Many of us are more and more dependent on others within our work-sphere and utterly dependent on devices for our writing. This article addresses both. "The present article examines collaborative writing in organizational consulting and training, where writing takes place as part of a group discussion assignment and is carried out by using digital writing technologies. In the training, the groups use digital tablets as their writing device in order to document their answers in the shared digital platform. Using multimodal conversation analysis as a method, the article illustrates the way writing is interactionally accomplished in this setting… The results show how writing is managed in situated ways and organized by three specific aspects: Access, publicity, and broader organizational practice. The article advances prior understanding of the embodied nature of writing and writing with technologies by demonstrating how the body and the material and social nature of writing technologies intertwine within situated social interaction."

Diana Fox Bentele

Communication

Hierarchical and role-based differences in the perception of organizational listening effectiveness

Brandt, D. R. (2023). *International Journal of Business Communication*, *60*, 1341-1367. https://doi.org/10.1177/23294884211055839

"A growing body of research underscores the importance of how effectively (or poorly) organizations listen and respond to key external publics and stakeholders. This paper describes research focusing on how organizational hierarchy and member roles impact perceptions of organizational listening effectiveness, specifically the process of capturing, analyzing, disseminating, and utilizing the 'Voice of the Consumer' (VoC). After reviewing literature in three relevant areas of research, the paper describes a study in which senior executives' perceptions of the effectiveness of consumer listening efforts in their respective organizations are compared with those of lower-level consumer intelligence providers and users. Results indicate that senior executives assess VoC program effectiveness in their organizations more favorably than consumer intelligence providers/users with respect to 10 key aspects of organizational listening. Implications for theory-building and knowledge development, along with implications for practitioners and directions for future research, are discussed."

Katherine Wertz

The effect of message repetition on information diffusion on Twitter: An agent-based approach

López, M., Hidalgo-Alcázar, C., & Leger, P . (2023). *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication, 66*(2), 150–169. https://doi.org/10.1109/TPC.2023.3260449

"Communication professionals are using platforms such as Twitter to disseminate information; however, the strategies that they should use to achieve high information diffusion are not clear. This article proposes message repetition as a strategy" and explores levels of repetition within Twitter that would maximize information diffusion while minimizing the wear-out effect on consumers. The authors propose an "agent-based simulation model for information diffusion" that "considers that consumers can reach their wear-out point when they read a tweet several times…. Brand followers are key to achieving high information diffusion; however, consumers begin to feel bothered by the tweet by the sixth repetition." The authors suggest an agent-based approach may be "a tool that any company can use to anticipate the results of a communication campaign created in Twitter before launching it."

Lyn Gattis

To interact and to narrate: A categorical multidimensional analysis of Twitter use by U.S. banks and energy corporations

Sun, Y., Kong, D., & Zhai, L. (2023). *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication, 66*(2), 117–130. https://doi.org/10.1109/TPC.2023.3260465

"As a recently developed register, Twitter has been researched as a personal-oriented communication method, but little research has been conducted on the register of corporate Twitter use…. This study used summary language variables of Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) as dimensions of register variation, and also conducted categorical multidimensional analysis (CMDA) of linguistic features and features specific to Twitter." The researchers examined "patterns of register variation in the tweets of U.S. banks and energy corporations" and explored possible "differences between tweets of the two industries within each pattern of register variation…. Results showed that tweets of both industries tend to display a categorical, confident self-regulating style, and a mixed tone. Tweets of banks are more formal, self-regulating, and oriented toward narrative (congratulatory, positive informational, and effortful), while tweets of energy corporations are more authentic and oriented toward interaction (advisory, routine, and affiliative)…. Overall, this study strengthens the idea that corporations use Twitter to facilitate corporate communication with a broadcasting strategy and narrative perspective, and to improve digital communication with an engaging strategy. Findings may shed light on promoting products and corporate impression management on social media."

Lyn Gattis

Design

Graphic design in public health research

Schmidt, M., Asfar, T., & Maziak, W. (August 2022). *Visible Language, 56* (2), 54-83. https://doi.org/10.34314/vl.v56i2

Most of us know the large impact of graphic design in public health information campaigns that follow research, but these authors studied involving the designers in the research process itself. "Graphic design is often deployed in public health research, intervention, and dissemination of information. In some cases, such as the studies shared in this article, graphic design artifacts are the public health intervention, developed and tested within a series of scientific study designs involving research teams with wide-ranging expertise. Relatively little attention has been paid, however, to the role graphic design plays in public health re-search or how graphic designers may contribute to the conduct of research beyond a production services role…. Therefore, the goals of this paper are to 1) provide an overview of methods employed to integrate graphic design into a multiyear series of public health research studies, 2) share key results from these studies relevant to graphic design, and 3) discuss the requirements for sustaining research collaborations between graphic designers and public health researchers in ways that effectively combine their fields of expertise and produce more genuine collaboration for the greater benefit of public health."

Diana Fox Bentele

Diversity

Participation styles, turn-taking strategies, and marginalization in intercultural decision-making discourse

Williamson, J. (December 2022). *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly, 85* (4), 445-467. https://doi.org/10.1177/23294906221114830

This international instructor included how people share ideas to make decisions beyond culture. "Marginalization in decision-making discourse results in disempowerment of the marginalized and detracts from the efficacy of participatory decision making. In ESL contexts, it is usually associated with English proficiency. But this view ignores the influence of preferences for different participation styles, an understanding of which is essential for the development of effective pedagogical remedies to the problem of marginalization. The present study addresses this gap by investigating discourse participation and marginalization from a participation styles perspective. Findings reveal that marginalization resulted from a failure to adopt turn-taking strategies associated with dominant participation styles. Implications for pedagogy are discussed."

Diana Fox Bentele

Education

Toward a greater understanding of the use of nonverbal cues to deception in computer-mediated communication

George, J. F., Mills, A. M., Giordano, G., Gupta, M., Tennant, V. M., & Lewis, C. C. (2023). *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication, 66*(2), 131–149. https://doi.org/10.1109/TPC.2023.3263378

"Computer-mediated communication (CMC) is an important part of work life. However, this communication can be dishonest, and when people attempt to judge dishonesty, irrespective of the cues available, they tend to rely on a few nonverbal cues that are not the most reliable…." To explore "the extent to which [people's] deception judgments are impaired or helped by cues they have access to for different CMC modes… [the authors] conducted an experiment with 132 veracity judges from New Zealand and Jamaica, who observed interview segments in Spanish and Hindi (languages that they did not understand) to isolate the effects of nonverbal cues. They determined the veracity of each segment and listed the things that guided their judgment.… The results suggest that when certain nonverbal cues are available, such as gaze aversion, these suppress attention to more reliable cues (e.g., voice pitch) when judging deception. Redirecting attention to more reliable cues is therefore important. Unexpectedly, cue choice also varied across language by medium…. [The authors conclude that] [a]lthough people rely on vocalic cues in audio-only media

and kinesic cues in video-only media, they tend to rely mostly on, and are distracted by, a few kinesic cues for full audiovisual media, even though vocalic cues are available…. To improve detection, deception training that targets reliable cues for different media is needed."

Lyn Gattis

Ethical issues

Confronting idea stealers in the workplace: The unfortunate moral credentialing granted to power-holders

Ploeger-Lyons, N. A., & Bisel, R. S. (2023). *International Journal of Business Communication*, *60*, 1123-1147. https://doi.org/10.1177/23294884211047994

"How and when do employees confront one another for stealing their ideas? Business communication literature on confronting unethical behavior is synthesized with moral licensing theory to better understand responses to unethical actors about unjustified credit taking in the workplace. In this message production experiment, working adults ($N = 344$) were randomly assigned to respond to a supervisor, peer coworker, or subordinate who stole or ignored the participant's intellectual contributions. Content and statistical analyses revealed subordinates were comparatively less direct when confronting bosses, suggesting third-party moral licensing and moral credentialing were measurable in communication patterns. Importantly, this dynamic was not attributable to perceptions of task interdependence. Instead, subordinates perceived the stealing or ignoring of their ideas to be less unethical than did bosses. Additionally, individuals whose ideas have been stolen in the workplace were less confrontational compared to those who have not. Thus, data suggest incremental acquiescence to this form of workplace wrongdoing, particularly when the transgressor holds high hierarchical status. Taken together, these data may explain how recognition for ideas tends to spread vertically to bosses (labeled here, *vertical credit creep*), which may function to reinforce established power arrangements and to perpetuate unjustified credit taking in the workplace."

Katherine Wertz

Recorded business meetings and AI algorithmic tools: Negotiating privacy concerns, psychological safety, and control

Cardon, P. W., Ma, H., & Fleischmann, C. (2023). *International Journal of Business Communication*, *60*, 1095-1122. https://doi.org/10.1177/23294884211037009

"Artificial intelligence (AI) algorithmic tools that analyze and evaluate recorded meeting data may provide many new opportunities for employees, teams, and organizations. Yet, these new and emerging AI tools raise a variety of issues related to privacy, psychological safety, and control. Based on in-depth interviews with 50 American, Chinese, and German employees, this research identified five key tensions related to algorithmic analysis of recorded meetings: employee control of data versus management control of data, privacy versus transparency, reduced psychological safety versus enhanced psychological safety, learning versus evaluation, and trust in AI versus trust in people. More broadly, these tensions reflect two dimensions to inform organizational policymaking and guidelines: safety versus risk and employee control versus management control. Based on a quadrant configuration of these dimensions, [the authors] propose the following approaches to managing algorithmic applications to recording meeting data: the surveillance, benevolent control, meritocratic, and social contract approaches. [The authors] suggest the social contract approach facilitates the most robust dialog about the application of algorithmic tools to recorded meeting data, potentially leading to higher employee control and sense of safety."

Katherine Wertz

Finance

Framing sustainable finance: A critical analysis of op-eds in the Financial Times

Strauß, N. (2023). *International Journal of Business Communication*, *60*, 1427-1440. https://doi.org/10.1177/23294884211025982

"Being at the forefront in the public discussion about sustainable finance (SF) has become a competitive advantage for financial corporations. This study

investigates op-eds by representatives of major global investment banks and asset managers (Black Rock, Goldman Sachs, HSBC, Morgan Stanley, UBS) published between 2018 and 2019 in the *Financial Times* regarding SF. Using an in-depth textual analysis approach, five overarching frames emerged: (1) climate crisis consensus and the urgency to act, (2) sustainable finance as powerful leverage, (3) sustainability in the name of profit and capital growth, (4) need for transparency, quantification, and datafication, and (5) shifting responsibilities. The results imply that SF is used as a public relations tool to promote new, lucrative financial activities that fit within the prevailing neoliberal market model. Rather than providing alternatives to the prevailing financial markets, the investment industry shifts responsibilities to the government, businesses and individuals to fight climate change."

Katherine Wertz

Health communication

Exploring the impact of internal communication on employee psychological well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic: The mediating role of employee organizational trust

Qin, Y. S., & Men, L. R. (2023). *International Journal of Business Communication*, *60*, 1197-1219. https://doi.org/10.1177/23294884221081838

"This study examines whether and how internal communication at different levels (i.e., corporate symmetrical communication and supportive peer communication) interact to influence employee psychological well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study also reveals the mediating effects of employee organizational trust in this process, which helps explain how internal communication influences employee psychological well-being. An online survey was conducted with 393 employees across various industries in the United States. The key findings showed that supportive peer communication was positively associated with employee mental wellness. In addition, increased organizational trust positively mediated the effects of both corporate symmetrical

communication and supportive peer communication on employee psychological well-being. This study advances understanding of employee psychological well-being by examining the impact of internal communication. The results of this study also provide practical implications regarding how to promote employee psychological wellness by creating an effective internal communication environment at both corporate and peer levels to cultivate employee organizational trust."

Katherine Wertz

Using TikTok for public and youth mental health–A systematic review and content analysis.

McCashin, D., & Murphy, C. M. (2023). Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 28(1), 279-306. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/13591045221106608

"Globally, TikTok is now the fastest growing social media platform among children and young people; but it remains surprisingly under-researched in psychology and psychiatry. This is despite the fact that social media platforms have been subject to intense academic and societal scrutiny regarding their potentially adverse effects on youth mental health and wellbeing, notwithstanding the inconsistent findings across the literature. In this two part study, we conducted a systematic review concerning studies that have examined TikTok for any public health or mental health purpose; and a follow-up content analysis of TikTok within an Irish context. For study 1, a predetermined search strategy covering representative public and mental health terminology was applied to six databases - PSYCINFO, Google Scholar, PUBMED, Wiley, Journal of Medical Internet Research, ACM - within the period 2016 to 2021. Included studies were limited to English-speaking publications of any design where TikTok was the primary focus of the study. The quality appraisal tool by Dunne et al., (2018) was applied to all included studies. For study 2, we replicated our search strategy from study 1, and converted this terminology to TikTok hashtags to search within TikTok in combination with Irish-specific hashtags. As quantified by the app, the top two "most liked" videos were selected for inclusion across the following three targeted groups: official public health accounts; registered Irish charities; and personal TikTok creators. A full descriptive analysis was applied in both studies. Study

1 found 24 studies that covered a range of public and mental health issues: COVID-19 (n = 10), dermatology (n = 7), eating disorders (n = 1), cancer (n = 1), tics (n = 1), radiology (n = 1), sexual health (n = 1), DNA (n = 1), and public health promotion (n = 1). Studies were predominately from the USA, applied a content analysis design, and were of acceptable quality overall. In study 2, 29 Irish TikTok accounts were analysed, including the accounts of public health authorities (n = 2), charity or non-profit (n = 5), and personal TikTok creators (n = 22). The overall engagement data from these accounts represented a significant outreach to younger populations: total likes n = 2,588,181; total comments n = 13,775; and total shares n = 21,254. TikTok has been utilised for a range of public health purposes, but remains poorly engaged by institutional accounts. The various mechanisms for connecting with younger audiences presents a unique opportunity for youth mental health practitioners to consider, yet there were distinct differences in how TikTok accounts used platform features to interact. Overall, there is an absence of high quality mixed methodological evaluations of TikTok content for public and mental health, despite it being the most used platform for children and young people."

Yvonne Wade Sanchez

Information management

Narratives, information and manifestations of resistance to persuasion in online discussions of HPV vaccination

Semino, E., Coltman-Patel, T., Dance, W., Deignan, A., Demjén, Z, Hardaker C, Mackey, A. *(2023). Health Communication. Advanced online publication.* https://doi.org/10.1080/10410236.2023.2257428

"There are both theoretical accounts and empirical evidence for the fact that, in health communication, narratives (storytelling) may have a persuasive advantage when compared with information (the provision of facts). The dominant explanation for this potential advantage is that narratives inhibit people's resistance to persuasion, particularly in the form of counterarguing. Evidence in this area to date has most often been gathered through lab or field experiments. In the current

study [the authors] took a novel approach, gathering data from naturally-occurring, non-experimental and organically evolving online interactions about vaccinations. [Authors] focus on five threads from the parenting forum Mumsnet Talk that centered on indecision about the HPV vaccination. Analysis revealed that narratives and information were used by posters in similar quantities as a means of providing vaccination-related advice. [Authors] also found similar frequencies of direct engagement with both narratives and information. However, findings showed that narratives resulted in a significantly higher proportion of posts exhibiting supportive engagement, whereas information resulted in posts exhibiting a significantly higher proportion of challenges, including counterarguing and other manifestations of posters' resistance to persuasion. The proportions of supportive versus challenging engagement also varied depending on the topic and vaccine stance of narratives. Notwithstanding contextual explanations for these patterns, [authors'] findings, based on this original approach of using naturalistic data, provide a novel kind of evidence for the potential of narratives to inhibit counterarguing in authentic health-related discourse."

Walter Orr

The role of symmetrical internal communication in improving employee experiences and organizational identification during COVID-19 pandemic-induced organizational change

Sun, R., Li, J.-Y. Q., Lee, Y., & Tao, W. (2023). *International Journal of Business Communication, 60,* 1398-1426. https://doi.org/10.1177/23294884211050628

"Integrating strategic internal communication research with organizational change literature and organizational support theory, this study proposes a theoretical model to understand the influence of symmetrical internal communication on employees' cognitive and affective experiences and organizational identification in a COVID-19 pandemic-induced change situation. A quantitative online survey was conducted with 490 full-time employees in the United States in mid-April 2020. Results indicate that symmetrical internal communication during organizational change contributes to employees' perceptions of change communication quality. In addition, symmetrical

internal communication, along with perceived quality of change communication, enhances employees' perceptions of organizational support and positive emotions during organizational change, which in turn leads to stronger organizational identification. Theoretical and practical implications of the findings are discussed."

Katherine Wertz

Instructions

Content strategy or strategic content? Suggestions for developing sustainable content strategy in advocacy organizations

Stone, E.M. (2023). *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, 53(4), 382–397. https://doi.org/10.1177/00472816231172137

"Using first-hand experience supplemented by an open-access archive, this article examines case examples of civically engaged, public-facing technical communication (e.g., training for community organizers) as well as the value of stories and storytelling for content strategy. By developing 10 best practices for content strategy in advocacy organizations, this article offers suggestions for how to design and sustain content strategy for community organizers and contributes to the field's knowledge of the content strategy of politically engaged nonprofits, particularly those with a strong digital presence."

Anita Ford

Intercultural communication

Lost in translation: The vital role of medical translation in global medical communication

Mao, A.X. (2023). American Medical Writers Association Journal, 38(3), 4-6. [doi: none]

"In today's globalized world, translating scientific and medical content is vital to bridging language barriers and facilitating communication among diverse audiences.

This article dives deep into the importance of medical translation and provides key best practices to ensure accurate and high-quality translations. Effective medical translators must possess strong writing skills in both the source and target languages to accurately convey the intended message while maintaining the tone and style of the original document. Developing and finalizing content in one language before translation streamlines the process and enhances the quality of the translation. Translators should seek clarification and ask questions during the translation process to deliver an error-free final version. Understanding medical terminology in both source and target languages is crucial, and staying updated with the latest terminology is essential for accurate translations. Utilizing a bilingual glossary or creating one in collaboration with the client helps ensure translation accuracy. Although machine translations have limitations, computer-assisted translation tools like Trados, memoQ, Wordfast, and OmegaT improve efficiency and consistency. These tools, equipped with translation memory and terminology management features, support human translators in their work. Medical translation plays a significant role in global medical communication, alongside regulatory writing, scientific publications, health communication, professional education, promotional writing, and grant writing. It is essential for effective communication and accurate information exchange in the scientific community. In conclusion, accurate medical translation is crucial for effective communication and collaboration in the global scientific community. Adhering to best practices ensures precise and high-quality translations, facilitating the sharing of scientific knowledge across languages."

Walter Orr

Organizational information and communication technologies and their influence on communication visibility and perceived proximity

van Zoonen, W., Sivunen, A., Rice, R. E., & Treem, J. W. (2023). *International Journal of Business Communication*, *60*, 1267-1289. https://doi.org/10.1177/23294884211050068

"This study investigates the relationships between the use of various organizational ICTs, communication visibility, and perceived proximity to distant colleagues. In addition, this study examines the interplay between

visibility and proximity, to determine whether visibility improves proximity, or vice versa. These relationships are tested in a global company using two waves of panel survey data. ESM use increases communication visibility and perceived proximity, while controlling for prior levels of visibility, proximity, and the use of other organizational ICTs. The influence of ESM on network translucence and perceived proximity is generally stronger than the impact of other technologies on these outcomes. These results highlight the importance of considering various aspects of the technological landscape conjointly, as well as distinguishing the two dimensions of communication visibility. Finally, the results indicate that perceived proximity has causal priority over communication visibility, indicating that communication visibility exists partly as an attribution of perceived proximity to distant colleagues, and is not solely inferred from the use of organizational ICTs."

Katherine Wertz

Protesting the protest paradigm: TikTok as a space for media criticism

Literat, I., Boxman-Shabtai, L., & Kligler-Vilenchik, N. (2023). The International Journal of Press/Politics, 28(2), 362-383. https://doi.org/10.1177/19401612221117481

"Though news representations of protest have been studied extensively, little is known about how media audiences critique such representations. Focusing on TikTok as a space for media criticism, this article examines how users employ the app to respond to representations of protest in mainstream news media. Content collected in the spring of 2021 illuminated two very distinct foci of discussion about news representations of protest: the Black Lives Matter movement and the Capitol riot. Our qualitative content analysis of TikTok videos and their related comments demonstrates how users employed TikTok's creative affordances to dissect specific news representations, critique the media apparatus, and expand news narratives. These findings shed light on the complex role of TikTok as a platform for media criticism— one that can be used for both democratic and non-democratic ends."

Yvonne Wade Sanchez

Leadership

A maturity model for content strategy development and technical communicator leadership

Campbell, K. W., & Swisher, V. (2023). Journal of Technical Writing and Communication, 53(4), 286–309. https://doi.org/10.1177/00472816231171863

"While technical communication consultants and researchers agree that content strategy requires attention to both customer needs and business goals, [the authors] found no evidence that technical communication educators promote an accurate understanding of business goals among their content strategy students. Through industry–academia collaboration, [the authors] integrate two existing models, using content tactics within organizational characteristics that define the maturity level of an organization's content operations. Analyzing the current state of maturity for each characteristic highlights gaps that can define a content strategy with prioritized tactics and, ultimately, encourages the growth of technical communicator leadership and the empowerment of our profession."

Anita Ford

Planning for difference: Preparing students to create flexible and elaborated team charters that can adapt to support diverse teams

Feuer, M., & Wolfe, J. (2023). IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication, 66(1), 78–93. https://doi.org/10.1109/TPC.2022.3228020

"A robust body of research supports the use of team charters to purposefully create a team culture with shared norms and expectations…. Teams that do not engage in effective planning for their collaborations are likely to encounter a range of problems including slackers, domineering teammates, curtailed learning opportunities, and general exclusion from the project work—problems that are often exacerbated on diverse teams and that disproportionately affect marginalized populations." For this study the authors "created three online modules that help students uncover their own tacit expectations for teamwork, share and merge these expectations, and then construct a team charter and task

schedules with their teammates. [The authors] used a quasiexperimental design comparing team charters from control and experimental groups to understand how [the] modules affected students' charters at a university with a highly international population…. Analyses revealed that control group charters tended to invoke universal team norms and assign punishments for failing to uphold those norms. By contrast, experimental group charters were more flexible, acknowledged competing priorities, evidenced greater planning, and articulated processes that could accommodate individual goals, values, and constraints…. Charters created after the modules showed more accommodation of difference; however, more research needs to be done to determine whether the more flexible and elaborated charters improve team behaviors."

Lyn Gattis

Political discourse

Message or messenger? Source and labeling effects in authoritarian response to protest

Arnon, D., Edwards, P., & Li, H. (2023). *Comparative Political Studies*, 56(12), 1891-1923. https://doi.org/10.1177/00104140231168361

"Authoritarian regimes in the 21st century have increasingly turned to using information control rather than kinetic force to respond to threats to their rule. This paper studies an often overlooked type of information control: strategic labeling and public statements by regime sources in response to protests. Labeling protesters as violent criminals may increase support for repression by signaling that protests are illegitimate and deviant. Regime sources, compared to more independent sources, could increase support for repression even more when paired with such an accusatory label. Accommodative labels should have opposing effects—decreasing support for repression. The argument is tested with a survey experiment in China which labels environmental protests. Accusatory labels increase support for repression of protests. Regime sources, meanwhile, have no advantage over non-governmental sources in shifting opinion. The findings suggest that negative labels de-legitimize

protesters and legitimize repression while the sources matter less in this contentious authoritarian context."

Yvonne Wade Sanchez

Public relations

Coworkers' perceptions of, and communication with, workplace romance participants: Proposing and testing a model

Chory, R. M., & Gillen Hoke, H. (2023). *International Journal of Business Communication*, *60*, 1290-1312. https://doi.org/10.1177/2329488420908321

"This study's purpose was to propose and test a model of workplace romance's influence on coworkers' perceptions of, and communication with, workplace romance participants. In testing hypotheses derived from [the authors'] model, [the authors] examined workplace romance's relational implications from the perspectives of workplace romance participants and third-party coworkers. Results reveal that coworker perceptions of, and behaviors toward, workplace romance participants were more deleterious than the workplace romance participants believed them to be, especially in the case of hierarchical workplace romances. In addition, attributions of workplace romance job motives led to reports of diminished coworker trust in workplace romance participants, which predicted less honest and accurate coworker communication with workplace romance participants. Theoretical and practical implications of these findings for communication in coworker relationships and antisocial organizational behavior and communication are discussed."

Katherine Wertz

The impact of employee empathy on brand trust in organizational complaint response emails: A closer look at linguistic realization

Van Herck, R., Decock, S., De Clerck, B., & Hudders, L. (2023). *International Journal of Business Communication*, *60*, 1220-1266. https://doi.org/10.1177/23294884211032316

"This study investigates the effect of linguistic realizations of employee empathy (LREE) on brand trust in email responses to customer complaints. [The authors] explore possible mediating effects of perceived empathy and perceived complaint handling quality and [the authors] look into moderation effects of compensation (Study 1) or customer's acceptance of blame (Study 2). [The authors'] aim is to find out if LREE have a negative or positive impact on the customer in cases of partial refunds, either because LREE are being perceived as insincere or as genuine expressions of concern. The results of two experiments show that LREE positively influence brand trust through higher perceived empathy and perceived complaint handling quality. However, the expected negative effect is not found, as LREE are more effective in a low versus high compensation condition. The effectiveness itself is not influenced by the acceptance of blame when a partial refund is offered."

Katherine Wertz

Research

Computer-assisted corpus analysis: An introduction to concepts, processes, and decisions

Lang, S., Buell, D. A., & Elliot, N. (2023). *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication, 66*(1), 94–113. https://doi.org/10.1109/ TPC.2022.3228026

"This tutorial aims to guide readers through key concepts, basic processes, and common decision points that inform computer-assisted corpus-based research in technical, professional, and scientific communication (TPSC)…. [K]ey concepts of corpus analysis useful to TPSC researchers and practitioners include the following: corpus location, text preparation, and programming language and software selection…. These key concepts can be used to establish basic processes and decision points that, in turn, yield lessons related to the usefulness of lexicogrammatical language models and the significance of multidisciplinarity…. Although corpus research is a growing and important part of the field of TPSC, challenges remain in terms of language model variety and ethical considerations. At least in part, these challenges can be met, respectively, by alignment between corpus and analytic tools and reference to the Common Rule and related international standards."

Lyn Gattis

Deciphering nested literacies: A case study of Allosaurus fragilis at the Smithsonian's Deep Time exhibit

DeTora, L. (2023). *Technical Communication Quarterly, 32,* 364–380. https://doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2022.2146756

"The author proposes a model for reading material characterized by 'nested' literacies to decipher complex information where literacy operates in enmeshed and unpredictable ways. A case study of a nesting Allosaurus fragilis illustrates how deciphering multiple interacting literacies can identify areas needing technical communication intervention. In this context, multiple literacies include the usual reconstruction of Allosaurus fragilis in museum displays, the public discourses surrounding the nesting Allosaurus, and the associated scientific literature.

Rhonda Stanton

Unearthing the facets of crisis history in crisis communication: A conceptual framework and introduction of the Crisis History Salience Scale

Eaddy, L. L. (2023). *International Journal of Business Communication*, *60*, 1177-1196. https://doi.org/10.1177/2329488420988769

"Coombs's Situational Crisis Communication Theory suggests performance history, composed of relationship history and crisis history, intensify crisis responsibility attribution. Relationship history is organizations' actual and perceived rapport with publics, while crisis history

is an organization's previous crises. Extant literature has only examined crisis history one-dimensionally. This study proposes the Crisis History Framework that provides insight into influential factors that can make crises more or less salient to individuals. Furthermore, the study introduces the Crisis History Salience Scale that can help crisis communications scholars conduct empirical research examining crisis history's multiple facets. Moreover, the study offers suggestions for how crisis history considerations can inform proactive crisis management, key messaging, and strategy development during crises."

Katherine Wertz

Rhetoric

The relationship of internal communication satisfaction with employee engagement and employer attractiveness: Testing the joint mediating effect of the social exchange quality indicators

"In order to improve internal communication within organizations, it is necessary to understand it better. This study explores the potential impact of internal communication on employee engagement and employer attractiveness by testing the mediating effects of social exchange quality indicators. A survey of 1,805 employees was used to test the relationships between internal communication satisfaction, employee engagement, and employer attractiveness and the potential mediating variables; reflecting the perception of the social relationship between an organization and its employees. The results showed that communication satisfaction correlated positively with the social exchange quality indicators (psychological contract fulfillment and perceived organizational support) and both outcomes—employee engagement and employer attractiveness. Additionally, the social exchange quality indicators partially mediated the relationship between internal communication satisfaction and both employee engagement and employer attractiveness. [The

authors'] findings were consistent with the theoretical models in which internal communication satisfaction leads to higher employee engagement and employer attractiveness."

Katherine Wertz

Scientific writing

Product placement bibliometric study: Generic journals versus specific-communication journals

"Media fragmentation represents new challenges for product placement strategies to become an increasingly effective way to reach consumers and non-users. In this frame, this paper has been developed with three main objectives: (i) to carry on a performance analysis to measure the visibility/impact of the scientific product in product placement (most cited authors, journals, and themes), (ii) to visually present the scientific structure by topics of research in product placement as well as its evolution to identify future research lines, and (iii) to compare both objectives in generic journals and specific communication ones. To this end, the resources in the Web of Science Citation Index were used. Scimat software was applied on a sample of 694 indexed papers from 1992 to 2021 containing 'product placement' with 8,521 global citations (176 of the papers were indexed in communication journals with 3,190 citations). [The authors'] results show that MEMORY is a key motor theme—the future of research tends to new themes in the communication field (i.e., ATTITUDES/BEHAVIORS or VIRTUAL). Three industries have been key: alcohol, tobacco, and food. This research adds value to previous analysis as long as [the authors] have included: (i) a multidisciplinary approach; (ii) an unfolded analysis focusing strictly on communication journals; and (iii) a longitudinal analysis to compare different periods showing dynamic scientific maps."

Katherine Wertz

Social Justice

Historicizing power and legitimacy after the social justice turn: Resisting narcissistic tendencies

Shelton, C. D. & Warren-Riley, S. (2023). *Technical Communication Quarterly, 32,* 313–326. https://doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2022.2141898

"As a field committed to solving problems, technical and professional communication (TPC) seems well positioned to engage the challenges that come with social justice work intellectually and respond with practical solutions. In this article, the authors argue that power and legitimacy are critical terms that can propel our social justice work, if we can recast them in our disciplinary history and ultimately renegotiate them in the trajectories of our disciplinary futures."

Rhonda Stanton

Social Media

The value of brand fans during a crisis: Exploring the roles of response strategy, source, and brand identification

Lim, H. S., & Brown-Devlin, N. (2023). *International Journal of Business Communication*, *60*, 1148-1176. https://doi.org/10.1177/2329488421999699

"Using a two (crisis response strategy: diminish vs. rebuild) × three (source: brand organization vs. brand executive vs. brand fan) experimental design, this study examines how brand fans (i.e., consumers who identify with a brand) can be prompted to protect a brand's reputation during crises and how the selection of a crisis spokesperson can influence consumers' evaluations of the crisis communication. Being buffers for their preferred brands, brand fans are more likely to accept their brand's crisis response and engage in positive electronic word-of-mouth on social media. Brand fans are more likely to evaluate other brand fan's social media accounts as a credible crisis communication source, whereas those who are not brand fans are more likely to evaluate brand and/or brand executives

as credible. Findings provide theoretical applications in paracrisis literature pertaining to social media but also practical implications for brand managers to strategically utilize brand fans in crisis communication."

Katherine Wertz

TikTok and political communication: The latest frontier of politainment? A case study

Cervi, L., Tejedor, S., & Blesa, F. G. (2023). *Media and Communication*, 11(2), 203-217. https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v11i2.6390

"TikTok is without any doubt the most popular social media among Gen Zers. Originally born as a lip-syncing app, it can be exploited in different ways; as such, it represents a new fertile space for political communication. In this vein, previous studies have shown that politicians all over the planet are joining the platform as a tool to connect with younger audiences. This study examines the use of TikTok in the last presidential elections in Peru. Following an affordance-based approach, we analyze all the TikToks published by the main candidates (Pedro Castillo, Keiko Fujimori, Rafael Lopez Aliaga, Hernando de Soto, and George Forsyth) during the electoral campaign, to understand if and how candidates have integrated this platform as part of their electoral strategy and what kind of content they publish and share. Through a content analysis that combines quantitative and qualitative elements, we demonstrate that, although all the analyzed politicians have opened TikTok accounts, they do not seem to take full advantage of the platform's affordances displaying a top-down communication style with almost no deliberative nor participative intentions. Political issues are almost absent since the platform is mostly used to display their personal life and enhance their political persona, with most of the content displaying a clear entertaining dimension. Some differences are discussed but, in general, results reveal that Peruvian candidates use TikTok almost uniquely for politainment."

Yvonne Wade Sanchez

Teaching

Instructional design pedagogy in technical and professional communication

Tham, J. (2023). *Technical Communication Quarterly, 32,* 327–346. https://doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2022.2130991

"This study investigates how instructional design manifests in TPC pedagogies and where educators draw resources from. As TPC expands into areas in which instructional design traditionally governs, scholars need to discern how TPC distinguishes its specialty while providing training to support instructional design practices. Through textbook and syllabus analysis, coupled with instructor interviews, this study reports findings about instructional design pedagogy within TPC based on the themes gathered from the instructors' experiences and existing resources."

Rhonda Stanton

Technology

360° video for research communication and dissemination: A case study and guidelines

Wuebben, D., Rubio-Tamayo, J. L., Barrio, M. G., & Romero-Luis, J. (2023). *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication, 66*(1), 59–77. https://doi.org/10.1109/TPC.2022.3228022

"360° videos are increasingly popular channels for science communication and higher education; however, time-limited 360° videos that disseminate scientific research via platforms like YouTube remain underexamined. To address this problem, this experience report reviews the creation and evaluation of six 2D video interviews and six 360° video tours…. Scientists researching energy-related technologies were invited to record 2D video interviews. Based on these interviews, six transcripts for 360° videos were drafted and recorded in the same lab settings. When the videos were published, European researchers and communication professionals were recruited to complete a short survey evaluating the videos' relative merits…. The survey results (n = 32) suggest a similar

overall quality of the 2D video interviews and 360° video tours. Respondents ranked the interviewee or narrator as the best feature of both the 2D and 360° format, and 47% said that they would prefer to have a 360° video created about their research…. Further research and practice are required to understand which specific features of the 360° videos are most effective and whether this technology offers distinct advantages as a tool for dissemination [on public-facing platforms]…."

Lyn Gattis

Multimodal critical discourse analysis for technical communication research

Agbozo, G. Edzordzi (2023). *Technical Communication Quarterly, 32,* 381–394. https://doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2022.2144950

"I propose Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) as an approach for understanding the discursive and material implications of technical documents in distant sites. I provide a historical vignette of MCDA and exemplify how technical and professional communication (TPC) researchers can critically engage with distant sites through MCDA by analyzing materials about GhanaPostGPS, a geolocation technology. I conclude by discussing limitations of MCDA – access to archives – and propose the creation of crowdsourced technical documentation archives."

Rhonda Stanton

Usability studies

Comparing student learning in face-to-face versus online sections of an information technology course

Shah, S., & Arinze, B. (2023). *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication, 66*(1), 48–58. https://doi.org/10.1109/TPC.2022.3228025

"The recent COVID-19 pandemic forced most universities into online course delivery. As such, the rapid expansion of online learning and the prospect of its permanent increase for many institutions have

sharpened the issue of the efficacy of remotely delivered courses." This study asked the research question, "Can information technology courses—especially those that are more experiential and technical—be supported through online learning given the extent of differences in efficacy between online and face-to-face experiential, technical courses?" The researchers "compared multiple sections of an experiential IT Outsourcing class over several quarters in two course delivery modes. The two modes were FTF delivery and online synchronous delivery. Students in each course section responded to two surveys where they rated their knowledge of different topics at the start and end of the course…. Online students reported greater increases in learning on average across all measured items. Self-reported knowledge gains were significantly greater in five items, mostly in soft skills and project management knowledge. The only significantly improved technical IT skill was in using software for virtual meetings." The authors "conclude that universities should embrace teaching experiential IT-based courses virtually, as it is possible to obtain greater improvements in self-efficacy, counter to much existing research. This is especially the case as instructional technology improves."

Lyn Gattis

User experience

Agentive assemblages in online patient spaces

Cameron, S. (2023). *Technical Communication Quarterly, 32,* 347–363. https://doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2022.2162133

"This article engages with TPC scholarship that calls for increased attention to agency as distributed and interdependent. This study analyzes 320 postings in one online health forum to better understand how patients come together to collaborate with one another, distribute information, and make health decisions. I argue that viewing crowdsourced forums as agentive assemblages may help researchers explain both the agency of individual actors as well as the collective agency of groups over time."

Rhonda Stanton

Using eye tracking to study information selection and use in procedures

Meng, M. (2023). *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication, 66*(1), 7–25. https://doi.org/10.1109/TPC.2022.3228021

"Procedures are an important part of instructional materials. To support practitioners in designing effective procedures, research is needed on how users select information from a procedure and put it to use. This study demonstrates how eye tracking can be used to inform such research. Eye tracking is used to study effects of adding pictures to procedures in a software tutorial on how users interact with procedures…. Eye movements were recorded from 42 participants as they worked through one of two versions of a tutorial: with or without pictures…. Accuracy on tasks was higher when the procedures included pictures. Including pictures sped up processing the instructions and executing the actions, but did not trigger more attention switches between the procedures and the application that the users worked with. Users spontaneously adopted a strategy of immediate task execution and processed pictures before acting…. Pictures facilitate efficient processing of procedures, leaving more resources for task execution. Reading and acting are tightly connected in a complex pattern. Eye tracking will be of value to examine their interplay further and the ways that it can be influenced by design."

Lyn Gattis

Writing

The art of assembly: script, platform, document

Dush, L. (2023). *Technical Communication Quarterly, 32,* 395–410. https://doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2022.2162134

"Drawing on fieldwork conducted with the designers of and participants in a new fellowship program to connect globally distributed grassroots leaders, this article defines a core set of communication-design practices that support emerging collectives and projects. The three practices detailed – creating a script, building a platform, and inventing protocols to document activity – can be

understood as part of an 'art of assembly' that is yet to be fully and systematically articulated.

Rhonda Stanton

When your boss says, "You need to sound more professional": Writing style and writer attributions

Campbell, K. S., Naidoo, J. S., & Smith, J. (2023). *International Journal of Business Communication*, *60*, 1071-1094. https://doi.org/10.1177/23294884211025735

"One line of prior research has focused on the effect of style on readers' ability to comprehend or willingness to engage with a message. A separate line has illuminated the effect of errors on the impressions readers form about writers, identifying potentially serious consequences (e.g., the willingness to accept the writer as a coworker or to fund the writer's business pitch). To date, few studies have investigated the effect of style on the impressions readers form of business writers. In this paper, [the authors] report a study of the relationship between business writer attributions and word- or sentence-level style features often emphasized by advocates of plain style. Using data from 614 respondents, [the authors] found statistically significant evidence that business writers conveyed (a) confidence by avoiding non-requisite words, jargon, and nominals and by using standard connotations and grammar, and (b) professionalism by avoiding non-requisite words and hedges and by using standard homonyms."

Katherine Wertz